Shojo Beat Manga
Tail of the Moon
Rinko Ueda
1

Tail of the Moon

Usagi is the granddaughter of the leader of a prestigious ninja village, but she's such a klutz that she's never made it out of the kiddie class. Frustrated with Usagi's lack of progress, her grandfather sends her to marry Lord Hanzo and have lots of ninja babies. But the lord has no interest in her or her childbearing potential!

The path to love is never easy, and Usagi has some unexpected competition. It seems that another ninja clan wants to welcome Lord Hanzo into the family, and they've sent the beautiful and talented Yuri to win herself a wedding. Usagi won't be daunted by her rival's looks and skills, but will Lord Hanzo's secret feelings for an off-limits princess be enough to send her away in despair?

Shojo Beat

Tail of the Moon

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Story & Art by

Rinko Ueda

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Tail of the Moon™

Volume 1

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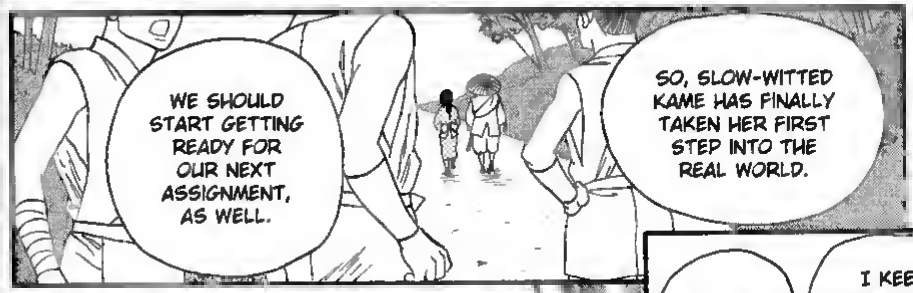
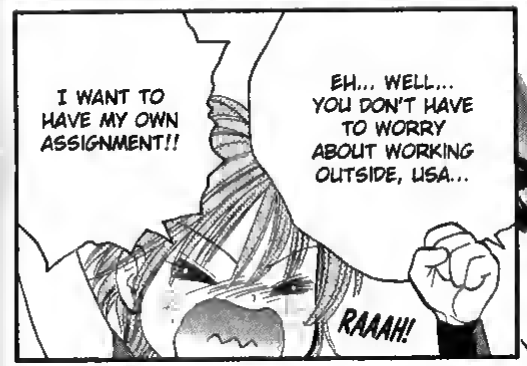
KAME...
...HERE'S A GOOD LUCK CHARM FOR YOU.
ARE YOU OKAY?! USA...
I... I'M FINE.
IT WILL HELP YOU RUN AWAY QUICKLY FROM ANY DANGER YOU MIGHT ENCOUNTER.
Thank you very much.
Usa, you're a mess.
A RABBIT'S FOOT!
DID YOU CATCH THIS RABBIT, USA?
I CAUGHT IT!!
THANK YOU, MAMEZO.
OF COURSE !!
PAT PAT
I'M SURE YOU'LL CONTINUE TO DO A FINE JOB IN TAKING CARE OF USA.
I...
I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU, USA...
WHY?

TENSHO ERA YEAR 8 (1580)
—SUMMER—
THIS IS HOJIRO, LOCATED IN THE SOUTHERN IGA REGION.
KAME, WAIT UP--
USA !!
USA !!
WHOA!
TRIP
THUNK

I WANT TO WORK OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE...
ONCE YOU'RE QUALIFIED, YOU'LL GET ALL THE ASSIGNMENTS YOU WANT, RIGHT?
NO WAY, IT'S TOO MUCH OF A DRAG.
USA, DON'T BE SO LAZY, AND HELP ME CUT THE GRASS.
AAARGH, IT'S SO BORING!!
I DON'T NEED TO BE QUALIFIED TO WORK OUTSIDE...
I'll show you how good I am! ♡
I'M GOING TO THROW THIS SICKLE RIGHT INTO THE MIDDLE OF THAT TREE.
WATCH, MAMEZO.
OOH... DON'T DO IT, IT'S DANGEROUS!
STROLL STROLL
SHUKSHUK
THUNK
AAARGH!
YIKES!
SHOOM
HUH?
FWEE
YEARGH!

I CAN'T HELP WORRYING ABOUT HOW YOU'RE GOING TO SURVIVE IN THE FUTURE...
YOU'RE ALREADY 15 YEARS OLD, USA...
...BUT YOU ARE STILL FAR FROM BEING QUALIFIED AS A PROFESSIONAL NINJA...
GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR FIRST JOB, KAME!!
D-DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!!


WE SHOULD START GETTING READY FOR OUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT, AS WELL.
SO, SLOW-WITTED KAME HAS FINALLY TAKEN HER FIRST STEP INTO THE REAL WORLD.


I WANT TO HAVE MY OWN ASSIGNMENT!!
EH... WELL... YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WORKING OUTSIDE, USA...
RAAAH!

IT'S THE SAME EVERY-WHERE.
I KEEP GETTING NEW ASSIGNMENTS, AND DON'T HAVE TIME TO REST.
I'VE HEARD THAT THE KOGA CLAN IS SHORT OF HANDS AS WELL...
KNIK KNIK

Here's a sickle.
THEN, YOU CAN HELP BY CUTTING THE WEEDS IN THE FIELDS.

Huh?
I'LL DO ANYTHING!!
ZOOM
IS THERE A JOB FOR ME?

LET ME BE BLUNT...
...
Oh, I have a splinter in my foot.
I KNOW ALL THAT!! YOU'VE ALREADY TOLD ME A MILLION TIMES!!
WE ARE BORN AS SHADOWS AND WE STAY AS SHADOWS, AND THUS...
WE NEVER STEP FOOT INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.
Have you gone senile?!
YOU ARE JUST NOT SUITED TO BECOME A NINJA.

...THE LEADER OF THE SOUTH IGA CLAN, MOMOCHI TANBA.
USAGI'S GREAT-GRAND-FATHER ...
...
GREAT GRANDPA!
Eeek.
MASTER!
Waaargh!

Y-YES...
EEEEE
GLARE
I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
USAGI ...

...SHUGENDO, FROM WHICH NINJUTSU WAS DERIVED.
A LONG TIME AGO IN THE ASUKA PERIOD... EN-NO-GYOJYA FOUNDED...
LISTEN UP, USAGI.

YOU ARE THE ONE WHO ALWAYS SKIPPED YOUR TRAINING SESSIONS!!
YOU ONLY GOT WHAT YOU DESERVE!
HUH... WHY?!
WHAT KIND OF JOB?!
REALLY?!
WHAT?
PERK
IT IS...
BUT THERE IS STILL A JOB THAT EVEN YOU CAN DO, USAGI.
GLOOM
TH-THAT'S TOO MUCH...
GIVE UP YOUR HOPES OF WORKING AS A NINJA!!
B-BUT, THAT'S BECAUSE I'M PHYSICALLY WEAK, AND I COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH THE OTHERS...

BY USING OUR SKILLS FOR THEM, WE ARE ABLE TO MAKE A LIVING.
...AND WE NINJA HAVE RECEIVED NUMEROUS ASSIGNMENTS FROM MANY LORDS WHO HOPE TO CONQUER THE NATION.
THE COUNTRY IS NOW TORN BY WAR...

This and that from the author #1

Hello, and welcome!! I'm Rinko Ueda aka Ue-Rin!! I intend to write bits and pieces about the creation of *Tail of the Moon* here. I know my handwriting is bad, so you may have some trouble reading it...

...but I hope you will all hang on with me to the very end.

ALL THE GIRLS IN THE VILLAGE HAVE THEIR FIRST CHILD AT 13 OR 14, AND RAISE THEM.

AAAAAUGH

OWWW, MY STOMACH HURTS...

I'M ONLY 15, AND...

NO WAY, DEFINITELY NOT!!

NOOOOOO!

STOP TALKING NONSENSE. SATO, WHO LIVES ACROSS THE STREET, GAVE BIRTH TO HER CHILD WHEN SHE WAS 12 YEARS OLD.

I DO NOT HAVE MUCH LONGER TO LIVE.

USAGI.

STAGGER

I... I'M TOO PHYSICALLY WEAK TO...

...DO THAT...

TH-THUMP

WHAT ...?

HOW CAN I GO PEACEFULLY, LEAVING YOU ALL ALONE...?

SURE, BUT...

THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, GREAT GRANDPA.

You're a tough guy.

NEVERTHELESS, I WILL DEPART FROM THIS WORLD BEFORE YOU, USAGI...

GREAT GRANDPA ...

HOW WILL YOU SURVIVE, WHEN YOU HAVE NO SKILLS AS A NINJA?

...TO MARRY HATTORI HANZO, THE LEADER OF THE MAIN BRANCH OF OUR CLAN, LOCATED IN SEGACHI...

...AND TO BEAR AND RAISE HIS CHILD!!

GO AND BEAR ONE.

... CHILD?

USAGI ...
...TAKE THIS WITH YOU.
PANT PANT
WELL, I'M ON MY WAY!!
YAY YAY!
GOOD LUCK, USA!
I HAVE WRITTEN OUT SOME ADVICE FOR YOU.
READ IT IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.
OKAY!!
I'll do my best!!
IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, SEND MAMEZO TO ME.
GOOD RID-DANCE.
DON'T COME BACK TO HOJIRO UNTIL YOU'VE GIVEN BIRTH TO HANZO'S CHILD!
YOU GOT IT!
TOMP TOMP

HANZO IS THE MOST HANDSOME MAN IN ALL OF IGA.
WHAM
...AND I'VE GOT NO INTEREST IN GETTING MARRIED TO SOMEONE I DON'T EVEN KNOW!!
I ONLY KNOW HATTORI HANZO BY NAME...
I STILL WON'T GET MARRIED!!
HUMPH
HE IS EARNEST, AND A FINE NINJA.
... HANDSOME?
BUT I SEE THAT YOU ARE NOT UP TO IT, USAGI...
THERE CAN BE NO BETTER MARRIAGE THAN THIS.
YOU'D GET THREE FREE MEALS A DAY, PLUS NAP TIME. AND HE'S HANDSOME, TOO...

Hey, he's still there. Ohhh, go home!
...MAY YOUR CHEERFULNESS...
...MELT AWAY HANZO'S FROZEN HEART...
USAGI...

HUH ...
HOW...?!
HOW DO YOU MAKE BABIES?

COME ON, DON'T BE A SPOILSPORT, USA!!
TROMP
TROMP
IT'S STILL TOO SOON FOR A BRAT LIKE YOU TO KNOW!!

La la la
A HANDSOME HUSBAND ...
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF PERSON HANZO IS?
HEY, USA.

C-COME TO THINK OF IT...
OH!
USA, YOU'RE WALKING TOO SLOWLY.
...EVEN THOUGH HE MAY BE HANDSOME, I DON'T WANT TO BE IN PAIN...
WHAT SHOULD I DO ...
GLOOM
I WONDER HOW, AND WHY IT HURTS ...?!
SATO, MY NEIGHBOR, TOLD ME THAT THE FIRST TIME SHE GAVE BIRTH...
...IT REALLY, REALLY HURT...
I ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT IT EITHER...

I WONDER WHAT GREAT GRANDPA WROTE?
BUT I WANT TO KNOW WHAT IT SAYS.
FWAP
USA, YOU'RE ONLY SUPPOSED TO READ IT IN AN EMERGENCY, RIGHT?!

HEY!! USAGI.
SHOOM

MAKE SURE YOU GET THERE BEFORE DARK.
SEGACHI IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT MOUNTAIN.
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
...SO DON'T FOLLOW ME ANYMORE!!
OKAY, I GET IT...
GIVE BIRTH TO A STRONG AND HEALTHY CHILD.
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP

AHHH!
I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY!!
VERY WELL.

BOOSH
TRIP
Ahhhh!
AHHHHHH!
RRAW
RRAW
USA...
RRAW!
!!
STOP, KUROKAGE!!
FWEET

PANT
WHAT IS IT?
CLOMP CLOMP
MAMEZO, COME OVER HERE.
YOU'LL SEE.
CLOMP CLOMP
?
LOOK OVER THERE IN THAT BUSH.
USA...
..WE HAVE TO HURRY, OR WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT BEFORE DARK.
MA... MAMEZO ...
LET'S REST FOR A WHILE...
CLIP CLOP
OOOH, USA.
PANT
PANT
PANT
RUSTLE
WHAT THE...
...
Here boy?
DOGS ARE SO CUTE.
RRRAW!
HOW COULD YOU, USA?
SHOOM
YOU KNOW I HATE DOGS!
POING
YEEEOW!
HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO BE A NINJA WHEN YOU HATE DOGS?
HA HA HA

...HE'S SO GOOD-LOOKING.
OH MY...
OH...
GRIP
WHOA...
SHA
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO USA?!
I... I can't pull it out...
I'M ONLY GOING TO TEND HER WOUND.

I APOLOGIZE.
MY DOG SEEMS TO HAVE FRIGHTENED YOU...
YOU CAN COME DOWN NOW.
KURO-KAGE WON'T BITE.
TMP
TMP

SO, HE'S A NINJA TOO...
TH-THU MP
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A HANDSOME NINJA...
HANZO IS THE MOST HANDSOME MAN IN ALL OF IGA.
COULD IT BE...
ARE YOU...?

SO, YOU'RE ONE OF MASTER MOMOCHI'S NINJA...
YOU KNOW HIM?!
HE'S MY GREAT-GRAND-FATHER.
HO... HOJIRO ...
YOU SEEM TO BE HEADED SOMEPLACE, BUT WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
TH-THUMP TH-THUMP
SPLISH SPLISH
DOES IT HURT?
A... A LITTLE...
WE'RE ON OUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT AND HEADED FOR...
PLIP
SEGA-
YOU SHOULDN'T REVEAL YOUR IDENTITY AND ASSIGNMENT SO EASILY.

That's great, Mamezo.
Look, Usa!
I'M SORRY I STOPPED YOU IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT.
I WILL TAKE THIS SWORD BACK TO HOJIRO FOR YOU.
THANK YOU!
YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE THIS TO ME?!
Cool!
IT'S A TOKEN OF MY APOLOGY, SINCE KUROKAGE SCARED YOU.
THIS SHOULD BE THE RIGHT SIZE FOR YOU.
Silk
I WISH YOU GOOD LUCK ON YOUR FIRST JOB!!
WE HAVE TO PART SO SOON ...?
SHOOM
WHAT...
WOOF
DASH
KURC-KAGE...
...GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE AHEAD OF ME.

ARE YOU HATTORI HANZO ...?
I WANT IT TO BE HIM.
IF IT IS, THEN ...
NO.
TOO BAD.
DROOP
USA, ARE YOU DONE YET...?
SHOOP
...PANT PANT
DASH
WAAAAHH!
I'LL GIVE YOU THIS.
USA TOLD ME TO TAKE THIS SO...
ISN'T THAT NINJA SWORD TOO BIG FOR YOU?
SOB
THUNK
OWW.
SMACK

OH!
WE CAME DOWN TO GREET YOU SINCE YOU WERE SO LATE!!
RUSTLE
WE ARE MASTER HANZO'S MEN.
YE...
...YES ...?!
HE...
...HE'S SO COOL!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE ARE SUCH NICE, ATTRACTIVE MEN IN THIS WORLD!
BUT THAT MAN WASN'T HANZO, WAS HE?
What a pity.
SHOOM
Tp
HUH?!
I'VE CHANGED MY MIND.
BUT, BUT IF HANZO IS THE MOST HANDSOME MAN IN ALL OF IGA, THAT MUST MEAN THAT HE'S EVEN BETTER THAN THE MAN I JUST MET, RIGHT?!
OHHHH, WHAT SHOULD I DO? I WANT TO MARRY THE GUY I JUST MET!!
Whoa
SQUEEZE SQUEEZE
I WANT TO MARRY THE GUY I JUST MET. ♡
I'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE, SO I CAN'T MARRY HANZO.
WE'LL KEEP WHAT YOU JUST SAID A SECRET!!
COME, WE MUST HURRY.
SNATCH
Hey, kidnapper!!
WHAT?!
Usa ?!
ARE YOU USAGI OF THE MOMOCHI?!
RUSTLE

HUSTLE
BUSTLE
EVERY-
BODY
TO
THEIR
SEATS!!
MASTER
HANZO'S
BACK.
SHOCK
THE
WEDDING
BANQUET?!
SSK
WH-WHAT
SHOULD
I DO...?
START
PREPARING
!!
USAGI OF THE
MOMOCHI HAS
ARRIVED!!
HEY,
UMM...
...YOU'VE
GOT TO
LISTEN
TO ME...
DASH
PLOP
PLEASE
WAIT
HERE!!
HURRY,
HURRY!!
FSSH
DASH
HUSTLE
BUSTLE
...
MASTER
HANZO.
CONGRATULATIONS
...
THIS
IS...
DASH
BLAH BLAH
HEY!

...GOD, BUDDHA, AND GREAT-GRAND-FATHER, THANK YOU!!
OH...
MASTER HANZO...
...THIS IS USAGI, MASTER MOMOCHI TANBA'S GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER.
SHWIP
THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME COME ACROSS SUCH A HANDSOME MAN...!!
MY NAME IS USAGI! ♡
NICE TO MEET...
PLEASE GO HOME.

SO THIS MAN WAS...
...HANZO AFTER ALL!!
WHAT THE...?
MASTER HANZO, PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEAT...
YOU...

I...
I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT!!
THAT CAN'T BE...
I CAME HERE TO BEAR YOUR CHILD!!
MY CHILD ...?
FLUSH
OOPS
THA...
THAT'S MY ASSIGNMENT!!

USAGI, RIGHT?
Y-YES!!
MASTER HANZO, PLEASE DO NOT SAY SUCH A THING...
WHAT ...?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU BEFORE?
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN GETTING MARRIED
I WILL NOT MARRY YOU.
WHAT'S GOING ON...?
THAT ...
FWIP
MASTER HANZO...
GET SOMEBODY TO ESCORT HER BACK TO HOJIRO.

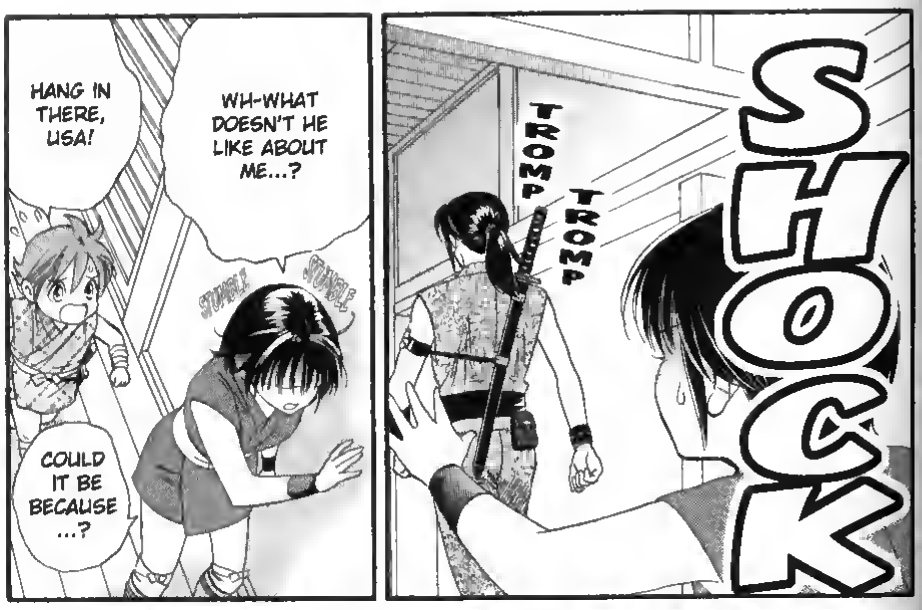
HANZO, WAIT!!
ZOOM ZOOM
MATRIMONIAL TECHNIQUES FOR HATTORI HANZO
HANZO!
LESSON ONE
SHA
STEAL A KISS FROM HANZO.
OHH!

I SAID NO.
IRUMPROMP
SHOCK!
MATRIMONIAL TECHNIQUES FOR HATTORI HANZO, LESSON ONE...
FWIK
I can't read the characters yet...
OH!
TH-THAT'S RIGHT!!
I'VE STILL GOT AN ACE UP MY SLEEVE!!
USA...
...WHAT ABOUT THE LETTER FROM THE MASTER?!
THERE...
...THERE WAS NO NEED FOR HIM TO SAY IT RIGHT IN MY FACE...
FLOP

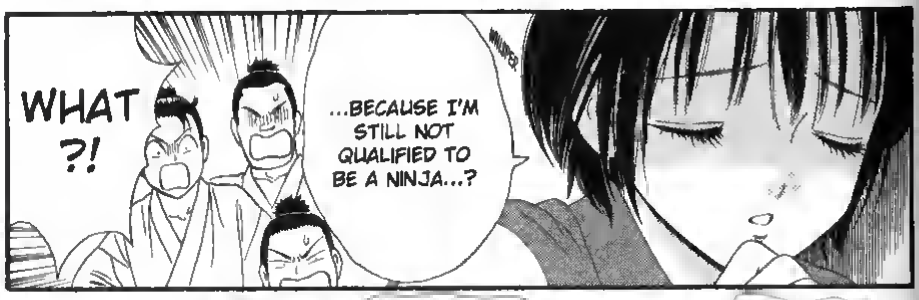
...YOU SAID "I WISH YOU GOOD LUCK ON YOUR FIRST JOB," DIDN'T YOU?!
HANZO ...
QUIT FOOLING AROUND, OR I AM GOING TO...
BUT THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS...
I WILL NOT GO HOME UNTIL I GIVE BIRTH TO YOUR CHILD!!

TH-THUMP
WELL?
LIKE I CAN JUST DO THAT ALL OF A SUDDEN!!
N-NOTHING ....
UMM...
BUT THE MORE I LOOK AT HIM, THE MORE ATTRACTIVE HE IS.
BLUSH
SHUMP
I'M NOT GOING BACK.
ENTRANCED
PLEASE TAKE CARE ON YOUR WAY BACK.

Tail of the Moon


HANG IN THERE, USA!
WH-WHAT DOESN'T HE LIKE ABOUT ME...?
STUMBLE
STUMBLE
COULD IT BE BECAUSE ...?

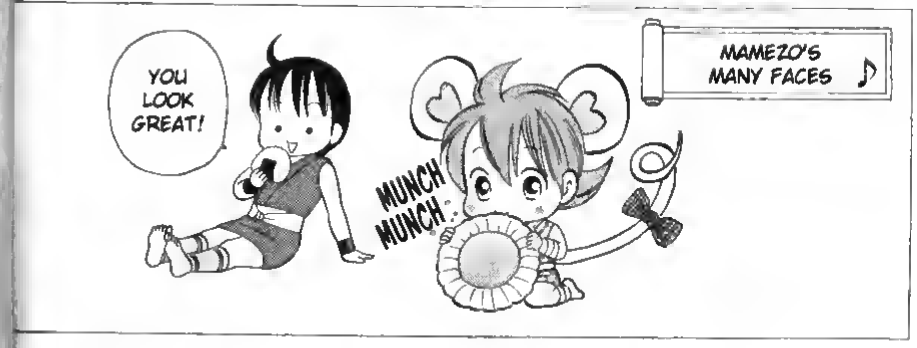
SHOCK
TROMP
TROMP


WHAT ?!
...BECAUSE I'M STILL NOT QUALIFIED TO BE A NINJA...?
WHISPER

BLAH
THAT'S A PROBLEM!
SHE ISN'T A QUALIFIED NINJA YET?!
BLAH
WE WEREN'T TOLD ABOUT THAT.
A BIG PROBLEM!
UMM...

I WILL NOT GO HOME UNTIL I GIVE BIRTH TO YOUR CHILD!!
BRAVO!
THAT'S THE WAY TO GO, USAGI!!
GRIN
GRIN
CLAP
CLAP

YOU CAN HAVE THE CHILD ALONE!!


MAMEZO'S MANY FACES ♪
YOU LOOK GREAT!
MUNCH MUNCH

...I'M ACTUALLY GOOD AT TIGHT-ROPE WALKING.
HA HA... TO TELL THE TRUTH...
COME ON, LISA.
TEETER TEETER
TIGHT-ROPE WALKING ...
I REMEMBER HAVING TO PRACTICE THIS OVER AND OVER AGAIN WHEN I WAS SMALL...
ONE-TWO, ONE-TWO.
TEETER TEETER
OOOPS.
RSSP
WOOOAH!
FWUMP
THIS IS USAGI FROM THE MOMOCHI FAMILY, WHO WILL BE JOINING US TODAY.
NOW, I WANT YOU ALL TO BE KIND TO HER.♪
HE-HELLO.
THEY'RE SMALLER THAN ME..
LET'S PLAY
MASTER HANZO.
TMP TMP
AAAHH!
TROMP
TROMP
HUMPH.
MA-MASTER HANZO...
SHOCK
Why?
I used to be able to do it before...
DON'T YOU THINK USAGI IS A GOOD GIRL?
SHE SEEMS TO BE A HARD WORKER.

I'M USAGI FROM THE MOMOCHI FAMILY.
SHUP
I INTEND TO GET MY QUALIFICATION IN A FLASH, SO I'M LOOKING TO YOU FOR GUIDANCE!
BOW
N-NICE TO MEET YOU...
SHAK
SHAK
AGAIN!
WHUM
WHUP
COME ON NOW, I WANT TO SEE YOUR ARMS MOVING.
I'M GOING TO DO MY BEST!
WATER SPIDER TRAINING
YEEEE-AARGH!
BLUB
BLUB
WH-WHY DON'T WE START OFF WITH THE BASICS...?
WHUP
HUH!
IT... IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE TOO SOON FOR YOU TO THROW THE NINJA STAR...
WHOA.
ROGER!!
SHUP
JYOON
JYOON
AAARGH!
TARGET

IT IS LATE, YOU SHOULD REST FOR THE DAY.
ZZZ
ZZZ
I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO MARRY HANZO UNLESS I BECOME A QUALIFIED NINJA!
WHOA.
WOBBLE
HANZO!
TMP TMP
FWUMP
TH THUMP

THUD
OUCH.
Usa.
OWWW ...
YIKES.
OH, NO!!
YOUR FEET ARE BLOODY!
JUST... JUST ONE MORE TIME...
NFSHZ
USA...
...LET'S CALL IT A DAY.
IT'S THE SAME OLD STOMACH-ACHE, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
YOU'VE GOT A STOMACH-ACHE, USA?
I NEED SOME MEDICINE FOR MY STOMACH-ACHE, TOO...
P.
POP
HERE'S SOME OINTMENT.
I CAN STILL DO IT!!
HUUAH!
USA, YOU REALLY SHOULD REST...
I'M BACK, YIPE
BUT MY STOMACH STILL HURTS.
BUT THEN, IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN TELL THAT TO ANYBODY...
I'M WORRIED ...
POP
I DON'T KNOW.
WHEN WILL YOUR STOMACHACHE GO AWAY FOR GOOD, USA?
...I USED TO PRETEND TO HAVE IT AS A KID BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO TRAIN, BUT AFTER A WHILE, MY STOMACH BEGAN TO HURT FOR REAL...
THIS STOMACHACHE ...

I WILL ESCORT YOU BACK TO HOJIRO TOMORROW...
THAT'S ...
NOW, GO BACK AND REST.
THAT'S ...
YOU'RE STRANGE, HANZO.
IT'S A LOT MORE FUN TO HAVE SOMEONE WITH YOU THAN TO BE ALONE!
I'M NOT GOING BACK HOME!
BUT ...
...YOU'LL NEVER BE HAPPY AS LONG AS YOU'RE ALONE.
TROMP TROMP
I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
He's mad at me...
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S STRANGE!

...
EVEN IF I GET QUALIFIED ...?
TUP
THAT IS RIGHT.
THEN TELL ME...
HOW CAN I BECOME YOUR WIFE?
TWINGE
THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY...
...I STILL HAVE NO INTENTION OF MARRYING YOU.
I JUST WANT TO BE ALONE.

SHWIP
USA!
OOOH!
JUMP
COOL.
THUD
OUCH.
TUP

...CAN YOU GO AND GET HANZO FOR ME...!
MA-MAMEZO...
I WANT TO BE HAPPY TOGETHER WITH HANZO!!
USAGI, YOU'VE IMPROVED A LOT!
MASTER HANZO WENT OUT THIS MORNING.
OKAY!!
vroom
WOW. YOU'RE DOING FINE, USA!
I WANTED HIM TO SEE ME WALKING SO BRAVELY...
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
SO HE'S NOT HOME...
A PERSON ...?!
WHAT'S THAT?
BY
WHOA.
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
HMM?
RUSTLE
R-RIGHT!
YOU'RE ALMOST THERE, USA!
WOBBLE
WOBBLE

SHOCK
I'M SURE THAT MASTER HANZO WILL BE SATISFIED WITH YURI AS A WIFE!
...QUALIFIED TO BE A PROFESSIONAL NINJA AT AGE 7, AND SHE IS A LEGENDARY KUNOICHI WHO IS SAID TO BE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL IN ALL OF IGA!
THE FUJIBAYASHI FAMILY ARE HIGH-RANKING NINJA, AND THEIR DAUGHTER YURI WAS..
O-OH NO! A BEAUTIFUL, PERFECT KUNOICHI HAS COME TO BEAR HANZO'S CHILD?!
ELDER.
SNAP
TSUKIKAGE.
I AM HONORED TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AS HATTORI HANZO'S WIFE.
THE PLEASURE IS MINE.
...I THANK YOU FOR YOUR QUICK RESPONSE TO OUR CALL.
YURI...
WHY DID YOU GET SOMEBODY ELSE, WHEN YOU'VE GOT ME...?
SHWIP

I AM YURI FROM THE FUJIBAYASHI FAMILY.
I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE ASSIGNMENT TO BEAR MASTER HATTORI HANZO'S CHILD...
...AND HAVE COME FORTH TO ACCEPT IT.
WHEN DID YOU CONTACT YURI?!
I WENT OVER TO ASK THE FUJIBAYASHI FAMILY LAST NIGHT.
YOU'VE ARRIVED, YURI.
TMP
TMP
ELDER!!
YURI?!
OOH, SHE'S SO PRETTY.
WHAT?!

This and that from the author 2

Tail of the Moon is the sequel to a long, one-volume manga I wrote called "Tsuki no Toiki, Ai no Kizu" (Sigh of the Moon--The Wound of Love) and "Tsuki no Toiki, Natsu no Yume" (Sigh of the Moon--A Summer's Dream). I had a lot of fun writing "Tsuki no Toiki, Ai no Kizu," since it was a love/suspense story about a person with amnesia, which happens to be one of my very very very favorite topics.

And in the second story, "Tsuki no Toiki, Natsu no Yume," Hanzo appears as a bit player, but I always had regrets about how poorly he was treated in it...

SHOCK
I DON'T EAT MEAT...
PHEW
...
SQUEE SQUEE
SQUEE SQUEE
THEY TASTE GREAT IN A HOTPOT!!
HERE!!
WAAAAH, DON'T BE MEAN TO THAT PIGLET!
WRIGGLE WRIGGLE
DON'T YOU KNOW THAT NINJAS DON'T EAT MEAT?
WELL, I THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T HURT TO EAT IT ONCE IN A WHILE...
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
OOOH, SHE'S DAZZLING ...
...SO COULD YOU PLEASE REMAIN QUIET?
I'M IN THE MIDST OF A VERY IMPORTANT CONVERSATION WITH MASTER HANZO...
HANZO... ARE YOU GOING TO GET MARRIED TO THIS PRETTY KUNOICHI?
WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE THE WEDDING BANQUET TO BE?
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
YURI...
I'M GOING TO KEEP IT AS MY PET.
I SEE THAT YOU'VE GROWN VERY BEAUTIFUL.
YURI!
IT HAS BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE LAST MET.
I HAVE BEEN EAGERLY AWAITING THE DAY I BECOME YOUR WIFE...
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
YURI...
SHO
OH
HANZO!
I BROUGHT A TOKEN OF MY ACQUAINTANCESHIP WITH YOU!

I INTEND TO!
yikes
P-PROSPECTIVE BRIDE?!
M-MASTER HANZO IS NOT INTERESTED AT THE MOMENT...
...BUT I'M SURE THAT HE WILL CHANGE HIS MIND IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
WHY DON'T YOU LIVE HERE WITH HIM FOR A WHILE?
I... I JUST REMEMBERED AN ERRAND.
HEY... WE THINK ALIKE.
AS I ALREADY TOLD YOU, I WON'T!!
DON'T!
YOU WANT TO EAT THIS PIGLET TOGETHER?
HI, I'M USAGI FROM THE MOMOCHI FAMILY.
GRRR
DON'T WORRY, I'LL PROTECT YOU FROM USA.
WE'LL EAT IT ONCE IT'S ALL FATTENED UP.
OKAY.
I'M GOING TO KEEP IT AS A PET!
PAT PAT
YANK
Nooo!

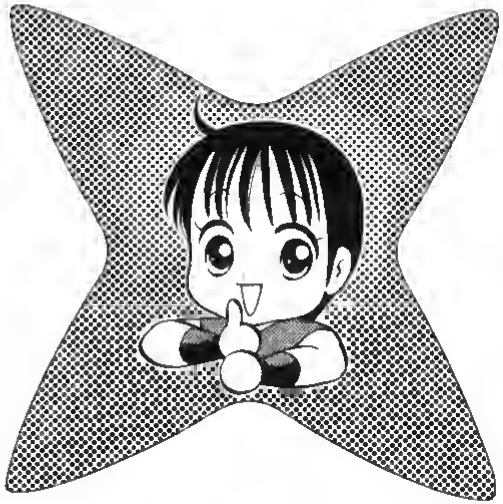
SQUEE!
THANK GOODNESS.
HANZO ...?
EEP!
THERE'S NOTHING GOOD ABOUT IT!
YOU SHOULD GO HOME BEFORE IT GETS DARK.
I APOLOGIZE FOR WASTING YOUR TIME.
TMP TMP
EH ...?
HUH?!
I WILL NOT GET MARRIED.
YAY!
HUH?
BLUNTLY
I... I AM VERY SORRY.
I HAVE REFUSED EVERY OTHER MARRIAGE PROPOSAL IN ORDER TO COME HERE AND GET MARRIED!
ELDER, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!
HEH HEH
I HAPPEN TO BE HANZO'S PROSPECTIVE BRIDE AS WELL.
GRR!
WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
THERE, THERE. CALM DOWN.
WHAT IS IT ABOUT ME THAT HE DOES NOT LIKE?!
PAT

WHAT IS THIS ANIMAL ?!
Waargh!
TOSS
IS HE YOUR SERVANT?
MAMEZO !
DON'T MAKE FUN OF USA!
SWAP
SWAP
WAAAAAAH!
IT HURT!
MAMEZO MAY BE SMALL, BUT HE'S REALLY STRONG!
SIGH...
BUT I CAN WASH MY HAIR REALLY EASILY NOW
HEH HEH
YOU SHOULD GO BACK HOME, FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
WHY?
THEN WHY IS YOUR HAIR SHORT LIKE A MAN'S?!
OH.
MY HAIR CAUGHT FIRE WHEN I TRIED TO BAKE SWEET POTATOES AND...
FWOOM
AAAH!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!
YOU REALLY ARE A GIRL!
WHOA.
OF... OF COURSE!
SNAP
...DO YOU WANT TO LET HIM FIGHT MY SERVANT?
THEN...
hee hee
HEY! THIS IS CHILD ABUSE!
BYE, USAGI.
WAAAAH!
SHOOM
YOU CALLED ...
...YURI?
HOW RUDE...
Ooh!♪ That was so fun.
THAT PRETTY KUNOICHI'S MEAN...
DO YOU SERIOUSLY THINK THAT A CLUNKY, STUPID GIRL LIKE YOU CAN BECOME HANZO'S WIFE?
WHAT?!
CAN'T YOU UNDER-STAND?!

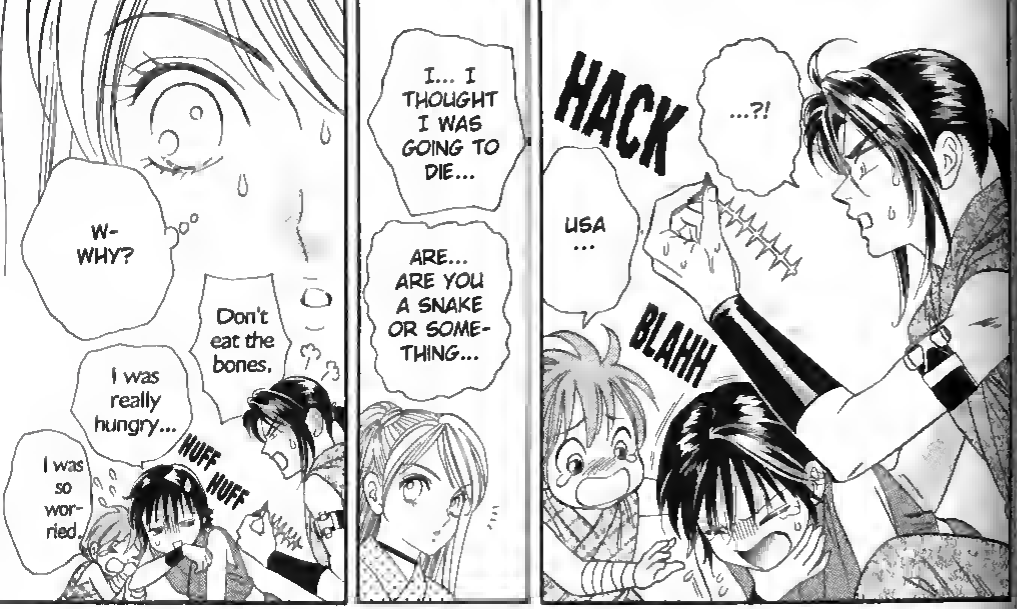
I MADE A VISIT TO MASTER MOMOCHI YESTERDAY.
GREAT GRANDPA ...?
I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO GET MARRIED...
NO...
GRR!
I... I'M SORRY ..
YOU SHOULDN'T GET CARRIED AWAY.
DANGLE
HMMP
Ahh!
...UNTIL YOU BECOME A QUALIFIED NINJA.
BUT MASTER MOMOCHI HAS ASKED ME TO KEEP YOU HERE...
HUH?!
TMP TMP
IF YOU DO NOT GET YOUR QUALIFICATION BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, I'M GOING TO SEND YOU BACK HOME, NO MATTER WHAT.
GLOOM
THEN I'LL JUST KEEP SKIPPING MY PRACTICE SESSIONS.
HOORAY !!
BUT YOU HAVE A DEADLINE.
...SO I CAN STAY HERE?
UNTIL YOU RECEIVE YOUR QUALIFICATION.
THE KLUTZ, I CAN UNDER-STAND...
...BUT WHY ISN'T HE INTERESTED IN ME...?
I DON'T GET IT...
GRAB
YAY, USA!
I DID IT!
WOBBLE WOBBLE
OHH...
TP TP
LOOK! ♡
I CAN WALK BACK TO THE STARTING POINT, TOO.
EH... YES, I SEE...
I'LL NEVER LOSE TO SUCH A MEAN GIRL!
OOPS.
GO, USA!
WELL DONE.
TMP TMP
HANZO!

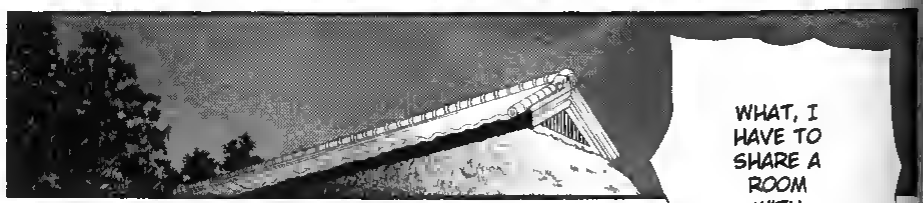
CRASH
ARGH...
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
USA?
USA!!
USAGI!
I... I CAN'T... BREATHE...

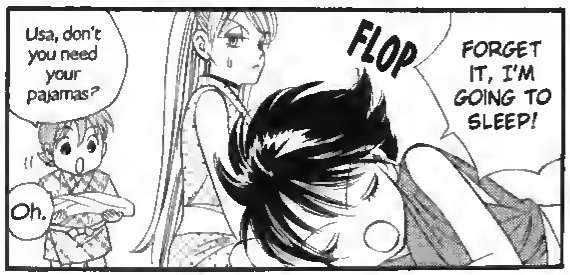
AT LEAST I GET TO STAY WITH HANZO FOR A WHILE.
BUT THAT'S OKAY.
AND MAYBE HE'LL END UP LIKING ME IN THE END... ♡
I'M STARVING!
WOW, THE FOOD LOOKS GREAT!
LET'S EAT!
SCARF
SCARF
SHLUURP
UGH...
S-STUPID...
GULP
I'm fowy...
DON'T SPEAK WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL...
MM WOING TO PWACTIF ZA WADER SFIDER TOMOWOW.
HANFO...
MUNCH
MUNCH

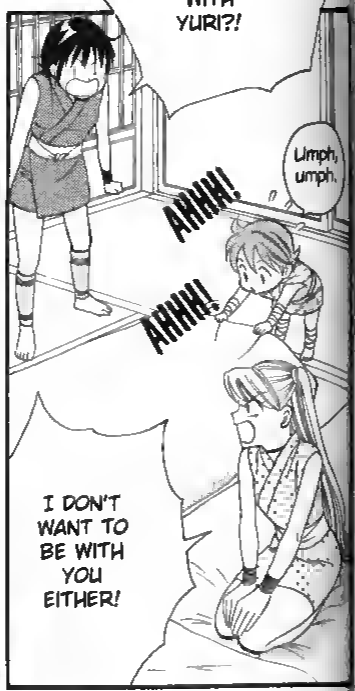


Tail of the Moon


W-WHY?
Don't eat the bones.
I was really hungry...
HUFF HUFF
I was so worried.
I... I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE...
ARE... ARE YOU A SNAKE OR SOMETHING...
HACK
USA...
...?!
BLAHH


WHAT, I HAVE TO SHARE A ROOM WITH YURI?!


Usa, don't you need your pajamas?
Oh.
FLOP
FORGET IT, I'M GOING TO SLEEP!


AHHH!
Umph, umph.
AHHH!
I DON'T WANT TO BE WITH YOU EITHER!

IT SHOULD HAVE TAKEN EFFECT BY NOW!
W-WHY?!
HROONK HROONK
I'm going to change into my pajamas

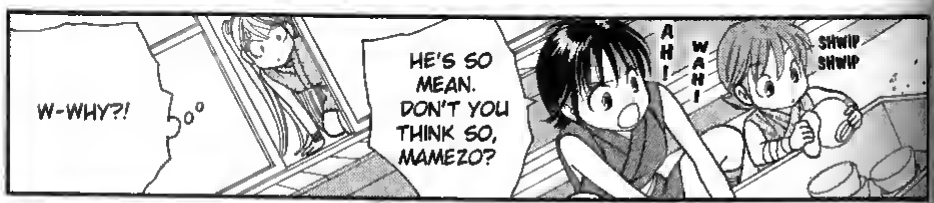
USAGI!
Usa...
THROW IT UP!
GAKT
Blargh...
Gurgh...
THROW IT ALL UP!
HANG IN THERE, USA!

Urgh.
SHLUP
WE ONLY NEED ONE PROSPECTIVE BRIDE FOR HANZO, AND THAT'S ME...

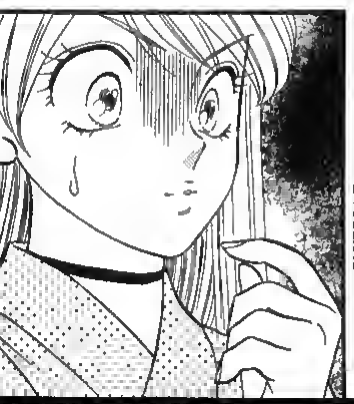
THAT'LL HELP YOU GROW.
GLUG GLUG
MAMEZO'S MANY FACES ♪

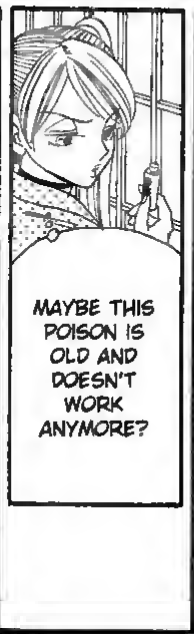
WHAT?!
THAT WAS A GREAT MEAL.
Phew!
You always eat so fast, Lisa.
Did you actually chew your food?
MUNCH MUNCH
TH-THUMP
LET'S EAT!
SCARF SCARF
WELL THEN...
LET US EAT...

I WON'T TAKE "WHAT" FOR AN ANSWER. YOU'RE A NINJA TRAINEE NOW.
WHAT?!
USAGI, FROM NOW ON, YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF WASHING THE DISHES AND CLEANING THE HOUSE.


W-WHY?!
HE'S SO MEAN. DON'T YOU THINK SO, MAMEZO?
AH!
WAH!
SHWIP SHWIP

LICK

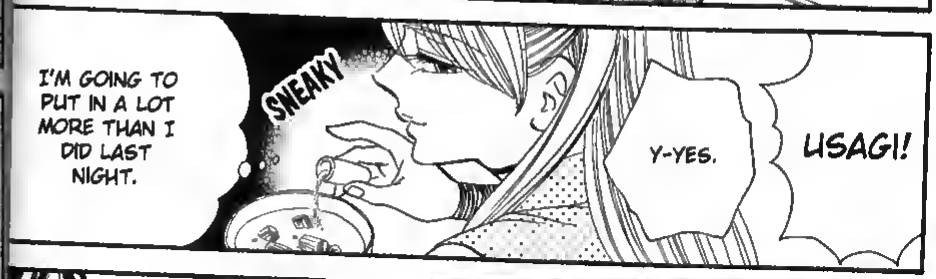



MAYBE THIS POISON IS OLD AND DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE?

WHY ISN'T IT WORK-ING?!
DON'T PLAY AROUND, USA.
I HATE CLEANING, LA LA LA! ♪
SCOOT

IT'S GOOD OF YOU TO HELP OUT IN THE MORNING.
USA...
...WAKE UP.
GUH-
GOOD MORNING.
HUH!
YOU'RE UP EARLY, YURI.

GARO
Oh, my dear Hanzo! ♡
GARO
IT'S TIME FOR BREAK-FAST.
HUFF HUFF
...


I'M GOING TO PUT IN A LOT MORE THAN I DID LAST NIGHT.
SNEAKY
Y-YES.
USAGI!

THE ELDER WAS NOT FEELING WELL THIS MORNING, AND HAS DECIDED TO STAY IN BED...
IS THAT SO... I'LL DROP BY TO SEE HIM LATER ON.

WELL THEN, SHALL WE EAT?
WAIT.
THE ELDER HAS NOT ARRIVED YET.

HERE YOU ARE, USAGI! ♡
he ♡
ohhh...
THANKS.

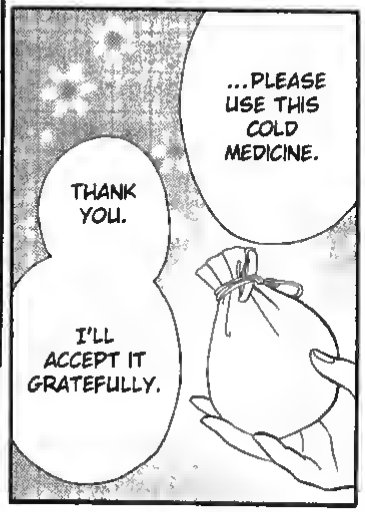
YOU ...
...YOU'RE KIDDING?!
I'VE BROUGHT THE WATER.
I TAKE STRONG MEDICINE ON A REGULAR BASIS, SO MY BODY NO LONGER REACTS TO NORMAL MEDICATION OR POISON!
Antidote, antidote!!
IT... IT HAS NO EFFECT ON YOU...?
WHAT ...?
FWUMP
MAMEZO ...
...CAN YOU GO AND GET ME SOME WATER?
HULP
URRGH!
DRINK AND THROW UP!!
AND THROW UP!
OKAY, YURI, DRINK IT!
THE WATER SPIDER PRACTICE SESSION IS GOING TO BE A LITTLE LATE, SINCE THE ELDER HAS CAUGHT A PRETTY BAD COLD, AND I MUST GET THE HERBALIST.
THEN...
I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
IS... IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU...?
FLUTTER
WHAT'S ALL THIS RACKET?
TMP TMP
OH.
EH... WELL ...
YURI SEEMS TO HAVE EATEN TOO MUCH FOR BREAKFAST...
PANT PANT
YURI?
SHOOM
AUGH!
COUGH
GASP
HACK
WH...
HACK
YOUR FACE IS PALE, YURI...
OH, MY!
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?!
COUGH HACK
WHY... DOESN'T IT HAVE ANY EFFECT ON YOU...?!
FOR GOODNESS SAKE...
...POISON HAS NO EFFECT ON ME.
I KNEW IT, YOU POISONED MY FOOD DIDN'T YOU, YURI?!
COUGH COUGH
I thought it tasted strange.
HUH?
GIX
COUGH COUGH
HEY.

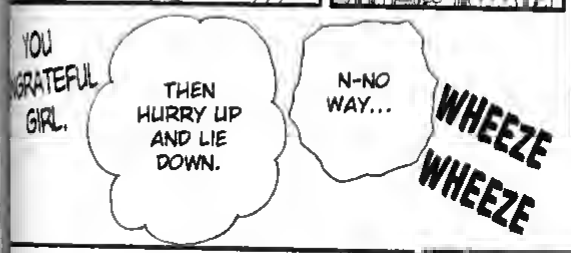
...WHY HE WOULDN'T WANT TO MARRY ME...
...BUT I CAN'T THINK OF ANY OTHER REASON...
I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY HE DOESN'T LIKE A KLUTZ LIKE YOU...
K-klutz?!
I JUST WANT TO BE ALONE...
...HE'S ALREADY IN LOVE WITH...?
SOME-ONE...

KEEP YOUR WAIST AT THAT LEVEL...
...AND SLIDE YOUR FOOT FORWARD!
I...
...
NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THAT BEFORE
...

HOW... HOW DARE YOU TELL HIM THAT I'VE OVER-EATEN...!
WOULD IT HAVE BEEN BETTER TO TELL HIM THAT YOU TRIED TO POISON ME?
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

YURI...
...BE CAREFUL NOT TO EAT TOO MUCH.
Say hi to the elder for me! ♡
WHEEZE
WHEEZE


...PLEASE USE THIS COLD MEDICINE.
THANK YOU.
I'LL ACCEPT IT GRATEFULLY.


YOU GRATEFUL GIRL.
THEN HURRY UP AND LIE DOWN.
N-NO WAY...
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

...IS ALREADY...
...IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE...?
HUH?

HUFF
HUFF
...
COULD IT BE THAT HANZO...

THE POISON SHOULD BE OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM IN A COUPLE OF DAYS, BUT YOU HAVE TO STAY IN BED.
UHHH
UHH

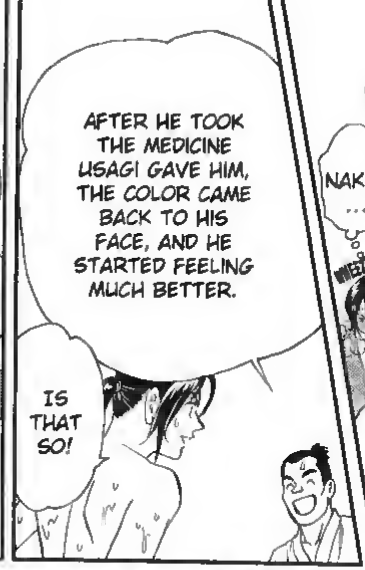
STRIPE
WOOOOOO!!
VERY WELL, WE'LL START BY LEARNING HOW TO SWIM...
You don't have to...
You're already drenched anyway...
OH, MY, MY.
DO...DO I HAVE TO TAKE MY CLOTHES OFF TOO?!
SPLISH SPLISH
HANZO'S NAKED BODY!!
SPLOSH
SLI...
...AAAAAH!!
TRY AGAIN!
SLIDE FORWARD, SLIDE FORWARD!
Y-YES.
IT'S THE SAME PRINCIPLE AS TIGHT-ROPE WALKING.
SLIDE FORWARD, SLIDE FORWARD!
Good luck, Usa.
SPLISH
SPLOSH
SPLASH
Hurgh!
SPLASH
Wah!
HURRY BACK TO THE SHORE.
USA!
MASTER HANZO.
THE ELDER'S CONDITION HAS...!
TROMP
TROMP
HANZO'S BODY IS SO DAZZLING!!
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
SPLISH SPLISH SPLISH
SPLISH SPLISH
DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO KICK YOUR LEGS SO STRONGLY?!
NAKED! NAKED!
DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU COULDN'T SWIM...
WHEEZE WHEEZE
FFSSH
HMM?
MASTER HANZO, YOU HAVE TO SAVE USA, QUICKLY!
YOU... YOU DON'T MEAN...

YOU'VE TAUGHT ME THAT EVERYBODY HAS AT LEAST ONE REDEEMING QUALITY!
I'm delighted!
WONDERFUL!
H-HE'S PLEASED WITH ME...?!
Oh, a runny nose?

...THAT HANZO'S BEEN PLEASED WITH ME!
IT'S THE FIRST TIME...

I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
HANZO WAS PLEASED WITH ME!
MAMEZO, WE NEED TO COLLECT SOME HERBS!
BLOW YOUR NOSE, USA.
SNIFF
A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE UPSET STOMACHS FROM THIS HEAT.
COULD YOU QUICKLY MAKE SOME STOMACH MEDICINE?
Nose?
OH! I'M REALLY GREAT AT MAKING THOSE!
Sniff

THE ELDER IS ASKING FOR USAGI SINCE HE WANTS TO THANK HER FOR IT...
HUFF HUFF
NAKED
HUH?


AFTER HE TOOK THE MEDICINE USAGI GAVE HIM, THE COLOR CAME BACK TO HIS FACE, AND HE STARTED FEELING MUCH BETTER.
IS THAT SO!

SPLISH
NAKED ...
WHEEZE
SPLISH
WHEEZE
IS IT CRITICAL?!
OH, NO.
TO THE CONTRARY!

PLEASE TELL ME IF YOU'RE IN NEED OF IT AGAIN, I CAN ALWAYS MAKE MORE...
SNIFF
OH, NO. NOT AT ALL...
HOJIRO MUST HAVE A VERY TALENTED HERBALIST.
WE'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A FINE MEDICINE.

WHAT...?
NO...
SHE OFTEN HAS AN UPSET STOMACH AND SCRAPES ON HER BODY, SO SHE'S INTO RESEARCHING MEDICINE THAT WORK FOR HER.
USA IS REALLY GOOD AT MAKING MEDICINES.
FWEE
YEAH.
DID YOU MAKE IT, USAGI?!
WHAT?!

This and that from the author 3

I had a small regret... And I wanted Hanzo to be happy as well, and that is why I created this manga, *Tail of the Moon*.

And the girl I created to be Hanzo's partner is Usagi.

I'LL MAKE THEM. OF COURSE, I'LL MAKE THEM!

USAGI SAYS THAT SHE WON'T ...

MASTER HANZO...

I SEE THAT YOU'VE ALL HEARD ABOUT IT.

AH.

TRIP TRIP

TEARS

HUH?

I'LL HAVE THEM READY BY TOMORROW!

YOU CAN LEAVE IT ALL TO ME!

I'M PROUD OF YOU, USAGI.

I'LL DO MY BEST! ♡

EE HEE

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

OH NO.

DON'T BOW DOWN TO ME...

BANG

USAGI ...

...I BEG YOU TO HELP ME!

TROMP TROMP

PHEW, WE'VE ACTUALLY MADE QUITE A LOT...

K-KEEP THE NOISE DOWN ...

UHH UHH

SSSH

MAYBE HE'LL FALL IN LOVE WITH ME IF I WORK HARD TO PLEASE HIM! ♡

GRIND GRIND GRIND

WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO MAKE HIM SOME MEDICINE?

YOU SEE, MY FATHER IS ILL WITH A HEART DISEASE.

Y-YES?!

WHAT'S IMPOSSIBLE IS IMPOSSIBLE!

PLEASE DON'T BE SO MEAN...

WAHHH!

I'M NOT A PROFESSIONAL HERBALIST, AND IT'S NOT LIKE MY MEDICINE IS A CURE-ALL...

MY SON WAS BADLY BURNED DURING HIS ASSIGNMENT, AND I WOULD LIKE SOME MEDICINE FOR...

MEDICINE ...?

MY GRAND-MOTHER IS DYING AND...

ZOOM

WAIT...

EEEK.
USAGI?!
IT'S ME. HANZO!!
A ghost!
FLEE
IT'S SO DARK.
I'M SCARED.
AAAAAAH!
YOU CAN DO THAT TOMORROW.
TMP
TMP
I... I CAME TO COLLECT THE HERBS...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?
WAHH WAHH
HA... HA... HANZO ...
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
NO!
I PROMISED YOU ...
...THAT I'D HAVE THE MEDICINE READY BY TOMORROW!
SNIFFLE
SNIFFLE
USAGI?!
SHWIP

MA-MAMEZO.
ZZZZ ZZZZ
FWUMP
I SHOULDN'T HAVE ACCEPTED SO EASILY...
I'M SLEEPY TOO, YOU KNOW... I WANT TO SLEEP...
USA..
I WANT TO GO TO SLEEP.
GRIND
GRIND
GRIND
GRRGG!
I...
I'M SO SLEEPY !!
MAYBE I'LL DRINK SOME MEDICINE TO SHAKE THIS SLEEPINESS OFF...
WOBBLE
My back hurts, too...
YOU'RE SO NOISY.
uhhn.
TRIP
WHOA!
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
...
NO WAY!! I CAN'T DO THIS!!
NOW I HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH ...
WAAAHH!
HUFF ... HUFF HUFF ...
IT'S ALL MIXED UP... THE MEDICINE...

IT'S SO LARGE...
...AND WARM...
FWUU
WHOA...
SHH.
...WHAT IS IT?!
I'M SCARED OF THE DARK!

I'M COMING WITH YOU, SO DON'T TAKE TOO MUCH TIME COLLECTING THE HERBS.
HIS HAND...
TH-THUMP
HANZO'S HAND...!!
TH-THUMP
WATCH YOUR STEP.
TH-THUMP
HIS HAND IS SO LARGE.

FIREFLIES.
THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL.
I OFTEN COME DOWN HERE ALONE TO WATCH THEM.
THESE SMALL BRIGHT STARS ...
I LIKE THEM A LOT...
THEY MAY BE SMALL...
...BUT THEY ARE SO GENTLE AND FRAGILE.
ARE YOU...
... ALREADY IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE...?
I DIDN'T MEAN TO ASK THAT...
OOOPS ...
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP

HA... HANZO.
WHAT IS THE MATTER ?!
WHY ARE YOU CRYING ?!
SNURF SNURF
UUUAAAHHH!
USAGI ?!
PLIP
PLIP
YOU'RE STANDING RIGHT BY ME...
WE'RE EVEN HOLDING HANDS...
...BUT IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE MILES AWAY...
SOB
SOB

HMMM...
THE HERBS... WE MUSTN'T FORGET TO PICK THEM...
GOOOO

I'M RIGHT HERE...
DON'T BE SILLY...
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
HANZO'S HEART-BEAT.
I CAN FEEL IT...

Tail of the Moon

Chapter Four

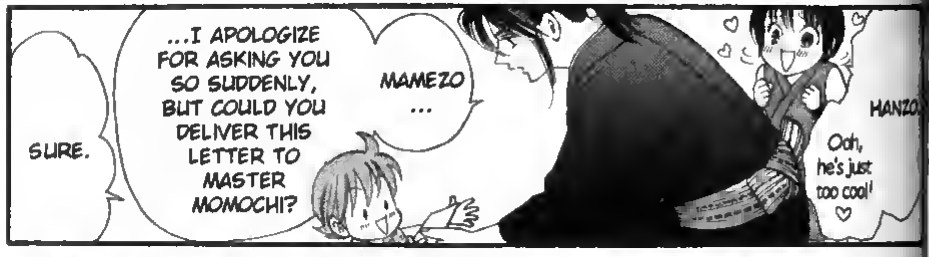
Tail of the Moon

Tail of the Moon™

OHH, I WITH I COULD GO BACK TO YESTERDAY! ♡
HANZO HELDME TIGHTLY ...
... SA ...
USA!!
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
GRIND GRIND
R-RIGHT...
I've been calling your name for a while.
YOU SHOULD SEPARATE THE MEDICINES SO THEY DON'T GET MIXED UP AGAIN.
HUH?!
TH-THUMP
HANZO?!
YOU'RE A GENIUS, MAMEZO! ♪
Let's look for something to put the medicine in. ♡
hee hee!

WHAT?
A DREAM ?!
HUH?
WHERE AM I ...?
CHIRP CHIRP
HMM?
I'M GOING TO SLEEP AGAIN TO SEE THE REST OF IT...
OH, SO IT WAS A DREAM...
I DON'T REMEMBER PICKING ANY...
HERBS?
REALITY
Oh.
SO IT WASN'T A DREAM AFTER ALL!
IT MUST'VE BEEN HANZO ...!
Oh, I fell asleep ?
Huh ?
I HAVE TO HURRY UP AND MAKE THE MEDICINE!

GREAT GRANDPA TOLD ME THAT IT'S DANGEROUS IN THE CITY BECAUSE ODA NOBUNAGA HATES NINJAS, AND HE'S HUNTING THEM DOWN.
WHY?
DON'T GO!
SO...
WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?
I AM WELL AWARE OF THAT.


SURE.
...I APOLOGIZE FOR ASKING YOU SO SUDDENLY, BUT COULD YOU DELIVER THIS LETTER TO MASTER MOMOCHI?
MAMEZO ...
HANZO.
Ooh, he's just too cool! ♡

OH, I NEED SOMETHING TO PUT THE MEDICINE IN...
THAT'LL DO FINE.

ABANDONED
...
I feel left out ...

I'LL BE BACK IN A JIFFY, USA.
TP TP
I'M COUNTING ON YOU FOR THE MEDICINE.
AND DON'T FORGET NINJA PRACTICE.
WHOOSH

USAGI.
DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
TH-THOSE CLOTHES...
HE... HE'S SO COOL!
I'LL BE AWAY FOR THREE DAYS OR SO...
I HAVE AN URGENT ERRAND AND I MUST LEAVE FOR THE CITY.
THE CITY?!

THIS ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN APOLOGIZE ABOUT, YOU KNOW?!
BUT... WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT...?
I KNOW.
A FAMILY HEIRLOOM ?!
I...
...I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY.
PLEASE DON'T APOLO-GIZE TO ME...
WHAT ?!
THAT VASE IS A FAMILY HEIRLOOM THAT HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN IN THE HATTORI FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS...
I WON'T DO SUCH A THING!
USAGI?!
DASH
H-HERE'S THE MEDICINE I WAS ASKED TO MAKE. COULD YOU HAND THEM OUT FOR ME...?
OF... OF COURSE.
WHAT, ARE YOU GOING TO RUN BACK TO YOUR VILLAGE?
SOB
SOB
USAGI?
SHIF
FLTH
IF YOU'RE SO BORED, WHY DON'T YOU CLEAN THIS ROOM...
HUH?
I'M JEALOUS. EVERYBODY'S GOT SOMETHING TO DO.
HUMPH.
HEY...
FLOP
GRIND GRIND
Time-consuming packing
Phew.
DONE.
WHERE'S NAMEZO WHEN I NEED HIM?
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
I'M STILL NOT FEELING WELL, YOU KNOW.
DO IT QUIETLY, WON'T YOU...?
WHOA.
PLOP PLOP
SHATTER
EH... WAS THIS VASE... REALLY PRECIOUS...?
PRE-
HMM?
CHAK
!!
USAGI ...
...HAVE YOU SEEN THE VASE THAT WAS IN MASTER HANZO'S ROOM...?

OH.
THIS IS OUR TURF, YOU KNOW?!
TMP
TMP
MEDICINE?!
HEY ...
...WHO GAVE YOU THE PERMISSION TO SELL THINGS HERE?!
THEY WORK REALLY WELL! ♡
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MEDICINES?!
LOOK, IT'S ACTUALLY A GIRL!!
STOP IT!!
UH...
NO...
SNATCH
YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S A GIRL!
JIII
OUCH.
OWW.
WHO DID THAT?!
SWUP
I'M SCARED !
SHUT UP, OR ELSE...
I'M SCARED !
NO!
DON'T TOUCH ME!

HANZO...
JUST WHEN HE'S STARTING TO BE PLEASED BY ME AND HUG ME...
...BUT NOW, HE'S NOT GOING TO LIKE ME...
MEDICINE FOR SALE
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO PAY FOR IT.
SIGH ...
APOLOGIZING WON'T BE ENOUGH
...
I don't want to see your face anymore!!
I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO STAND IT IF HE SAYS SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
Get out of here this instant!
My family ...
heir-loom
TH THUMP
OOOH, I BET HE'S STILL GOING TO BE MAD AT ME, EVEN IF I GET HIM A NEW VASE...
SILENCE
Ooh ...
Sob ...
AND NOBODY SEEMS TO BE COMING THIS WAY!
A CUSTOMER ?!
TMP
TMP
...I DON'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT BY A NINJA HUNT!
NO WAY, NO WAY...
MAYBE I HAVE TO MOVE CLOSER TO THE TOWN?

OOF.
FWAP
WHUP
WHA!
KANG
URGH.
SLISH
I'M SCARED!
AAAAH.
WHOA.

I DON'T APPROVE OF USING FORCE ON GIRLS.
WHAT?!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE...
...KIND AND GENTLE WITH THEM.
OR YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO BE POPULAR. ♡
DON'T TRY TO PRESS YOUR LUCK, YOU'RE ONLY A LITTLE GOOD-LOOKING, YOU KNOW!
HOW DARE YOU.
GRAAHH!

WAHHH!
WAHHH!
HICCUP
SOB
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO SCARED IN MY LIFE.
SO YOU'RE SELLING MEDICINE?
YEAH.
YOU WERE SCARED WEREN'T YOU?
...I'M SORRY.
NOW, NOW.
WAAAAAH!
WA...
YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
EEP!
HEY...
...MY HAIR.
OH...
PLOP
...OR DO I NEED TO SHOW YOU MORE?
SO, AM I JUST A GOOD-LOOKING GUY LIKE YOU THOUGHT...
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
Eh...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, ARE YOU TOO SCARED TO STAND UP?
HOW BORING.
WE'VE HAD ENOUGH!
NEEERU!
REALLY?!
I'LL TAKE EVERYTHING, THEN.
GRIN
GRIN
REALLY, REALLY. ♡
SHUP
SHIF
HUH?
EH... UMM...

SO THIS IS IT, I'M NOT GOING TO QUALIFY AS A NINJA...
CLOP
AM... AM I...
CLIP
...AM I GOING TO BE SOLD OFF SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY?!
I'M NOT GOING TO GET THE CHANCE TO BEAR HANZO'S CHILD, BUT I AM GOING TO BE SOLD...!
URK
EEEK.
NOW HE'S CARRYING ME!
THE HORSE STOPPED!
DON'T MOVE.
WHERE AM I?!
FROZEN
IF YOU MOVE, IT'LL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE.
YOU CAN MOVE NOW.
OOOH...
THUD
GOOD-BYE, HANZO.
BLAH
HIYA.
I KNEW IT, I'M GOING TO BE SOLD!
WELCOME.
BLAH
BLAH
PEOPLE'S VOICES!!
BLAH
BLAH

CLIP CLOP
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T TREAT YOU BADLY. ♪
WHAT?!
I'M BUYING YOU ALONG WITH THE WHOLE LOT! ♡
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
DASH
CLOP CLIP
!!
SHUP
WELL THEN, YOU HAVE TO KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.
SHUP
YOU'RE A NINJA?
YOU SURE DON'T LOOK LIKE ONE...
I DON'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT BY A NINJA HUNT!
GYAA!
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?!
NOOO.
THE CITY!!
GYAA!

This and that from the author 4

At the beginning of this series, even I was surprised at how much of a klutz Usagi really was. But the more the story unfolded, the more I began to see the cuteness within her.

Mamezo and the piglet are cute, friendly characters, and I enjoy drawing them, too.

TH- THEY'RE DAZZLING ...
CHOOSE ANY KIMONO YOU LIKE.
SO... SO YOU'RE GOING TO DRESS ME UP IN A PRETTY KIMONO, AND SELL ME OFF FOR A GOOD PRICE...
HUH?
HEY, MISTER ...CAN YOU PICK A KIMONO THAT WOULD LOOK GOOD ON HER?
OF COURSE.
SELL WHAT?
MY, MY, YOUR FACE IS ALL DIRTY WITH TEARS AND SNOT.
Oww
Sob ...
LET'S GET YOUR FACE CLEANED UP FIRST.
HUH?
UMM.
IT'LL BE EVEN BETTER IF YOU CAN FIX HER FACE WITH SOME MAKEUP, TOO.

WOW!
DON'T LOOK AROUND TOO MUCH.
SO THIS IS WHAT THE CITY IS LIKE?!
山城屋

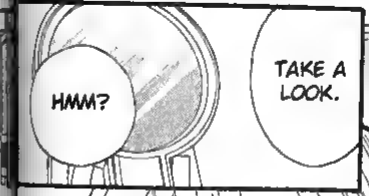
GU U U RRRRRR
I'LL GIVE THIS TO HANZO...
ARE YOU HUNGRY ?
NOW THAT I'M FREE OF MY WORRIES, I...

OKAY, I'LL BUY IT FOR YOU.
YIPPEE!
THANK YOU!!

You sure do have strange taste...
WHAT? YOU LIKE VASES?
THIS ONE!
IT LOOKS SO SIMILAR!!
WEL-COME.

BUT EVERYTHING SO NEW TO ME...
VASES !

HUFF HUFF
O-OKAY, WE JUST NEED TO ADD SOME ROUGE TO YOUR LIPS AND WE'LL BE DONE.
HMMPH ?!
LICK LICK
DON'T LICK IT.
THIS TASTES STRANGE.
LICK LICK


HMM?
TAKE A LOOK.

SEE, DON'T YOU LOOK PRETTY?
NOW YOU CAN WALK OUTSIDE WITH NOTHING TO FEAR.
WHAT...?

SINCH
We won't suffo-cate you.
THEY ...
...THEY'RE GOING TO SUFFOCATE ME.
YOU LOOK SO CUTE! ♡

HUH?!
I LOOK LIKE A BRIDE...
IS THIS... REALLY ME...?

WHAT, ARE YOU FULL ALREADY?
...I REALLY MISS HANZO ALL OF A SUDDEN...
...HE HAS THE SAME SMILE AS HANZO...
THIS GUY...
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT...
hurk
Hey, I'll take this if you're not eating it!!
NO WAY!
SNARF SNARF
LET ME LOOSEN IT FOR YOU.
Shucks, I know I can eat more.
THE BELT, IT'S TOO...
MY... MY STOMACH ...
PHEW.
MUNCH MUNCH

HIRAGIYA
I...
...I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY OF THESE THINGS...
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TRY IT.
CHOMP
IT'S DELICIOUS!
I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.
UNAGI?
MUNCH MUNCH
UFAGI.
I FORGOT TO ASK YOU YOUR NAME. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
IT'S SO GOOD. IT'S SO SWEET AND SOFT.
TH-THUMP
THAT'S A STRANGE NAME.

DASH
HUH...?
WE'RE ON THE SECOND FLOOR, YOU KNOW?!
AAAAAAAAH!
SNATCH

NOW IT'S MY TURN TO HAVE A BITE...
WHA- WHAT IS IT?!
NO... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
DON'T WORRY ... I'LL BE GENTLE.
NO!
SHIVER
TROMP TROMP
SHA
BOOM
UNAGI?!

HANZO!
WHY, IT'S HANZO!
HANZOU ?!
I... I KNEW IT, HE'S MAD AT ME...
A-ARE... ARE YOU TRYING TO SCARE ME TO DEATH...?
You broke the vase!!
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP

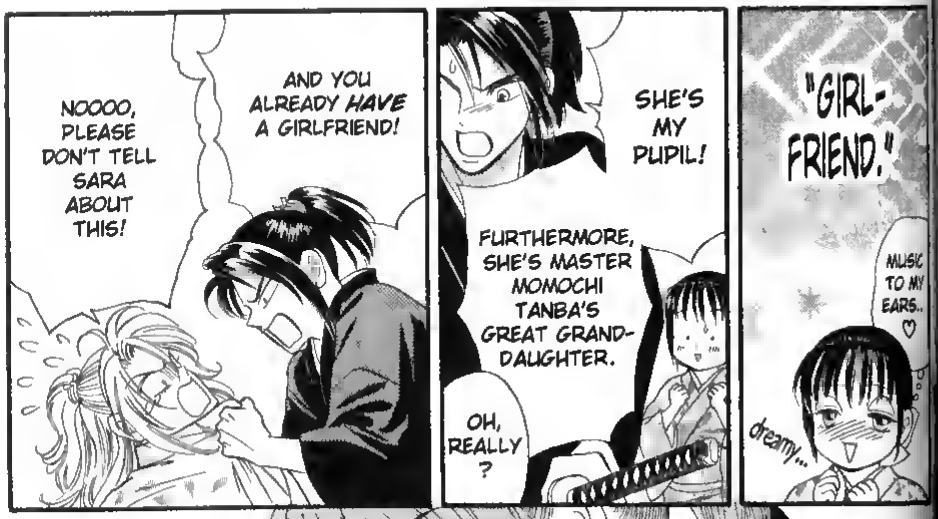
PHEW.
!!
HA... HA... HANZO!
URK
AAARU

Tail of the Moon

SLAM
HANZOU!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE WITH USAGI?!
U...
UNAGI WAS SELLING MEDICINE, AND I JUST BOUGHT THEM FROM HER...
TROMP TROMP
SHUFF SHUFF
SHA
OH, REALLY?
HER NAME IS "USAGI," NOT "UNAGI"!!
MASTER HANZO!
I'M REALLY SORRY!
I BROKE YOUR PRECIOUS FAMILY HEIRLOOM ...
PEEK
WH...
WHY YOU...
YIKES! I KNEW IT, HE'S REALLY MAD AT ME!
SO, I GOT YOU ANOTHER VASE AS AN APOLOGY!

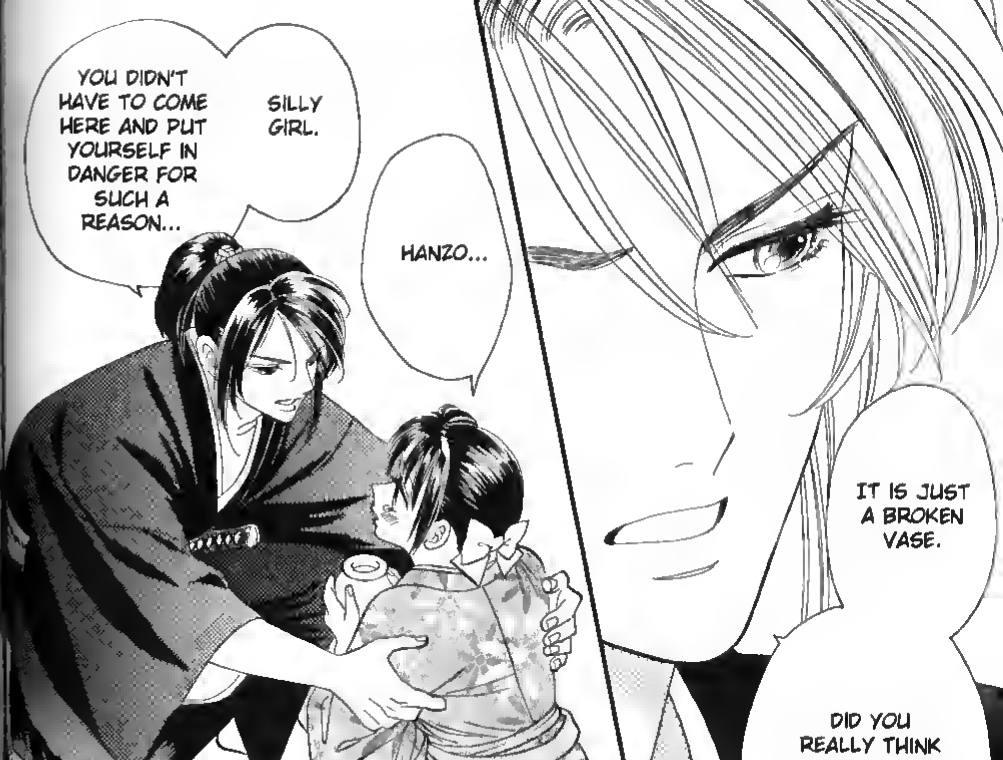
GRIP
OH...
SKKSH
DASH
PATTA
SHIP
HANZO!
HANZOU!
YIKES!
HUH...?

YOU DON'T SCARE ME AT ALL.
GRRRR!
MAMEZO'S MANY FACES ♪


NOOOO, PLEASE DON'T TELL SARA ABOUT THIS!
AND YOU ALREADY HAVE A GIRLFRIEND!
SHE'S MY PUPIL!
FURTHERMORE, SHE'S MASTER MOMOCHI TANBA'S GREAT GRAND-DAUGHTER.
OH, REALLY ?
"GIRL-FRIEND."
MUSIC TO MY EARS.. ♡
dreamy...

UH... IS HIS NAME HANZO, TOO?
PHEW.
FOOMP
VERY WELL.
THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.

THIS IS HATTORI HANZOU FROM OKAZAKI, A MEMBER OF ONE OF THE BRANCHES OF OUR CLAN.


YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME HERE AND PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER FOR SUCH A REASON...
SILLY GIRL.
HANZO...
IT IS JUST A BROKEN VASE.
DID YOU REALLY THINK THAT I WOULD GET ANGRY WITH YOU?

...CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO ME, WHY USAGI FELL FROM THE SECOND FLOOR?
HANZOU ...
Hey, good-lookin?!
YOU'RE ONE GREAT, TOLERANT GUY, HANZO!

I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS YOUR GIRLFRIEND, HANZO!
HOW DARE YOU!!

EH, UMM...
HE TOUCHED MY BREASTS ...
SOB

I WANT TO SEE WHAT HANZO IS LIKE AT WORK!
HUH?!
HEY, THERE'S NO NEED TO HURRY...
I'M GOING TO FOLLOW HANZO!
OH, WELL.
TMP TMP

SNEAK SNEAK

O-OOO-O
LOOK.
THAT GIRL JUST LOOKED BACK AT HANZO.
HEY, THAT GIRL, TOO.
No fun at all.
HE'S PROBABLY ONLY GOING TO MEET HIS CLIENT, YOU KNOW?
OOOH, HANZO'S SO COOL! ♡

MANY OF THE HEIRS OF THE HATTORI CLAN ARE GIVEN SOME VARIATION OF THE NAME HANZO.
SO YOU'RE RELATIVES?
THAT'S RIGHT.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, MY FATHER'S NAME IS HANZO.
TROMP TROMP
I MUSTN'T BE LATE FOR MY APPOINTMENT.
DON'T FORGET TO ESCORT HER, HANZOU.
OKAY, OKAY.
YOU'RE GOING ALREADY?
HANZOU, TAKE USAGI BACK TO SEGACHI FOR ME.
I MUST GO.
LOTS OF HANZOS ...?
How puzzling...

...AND STRONG!!
DA DOOM
...WITH LONG BEAUTIFUL HAIR...
DOOOM
PRETTY...
DOOM
HANZO JUST TURNED AT A CORNER.
HEY...
HE LIKES WOMEN WHO ARE SKILLED IN MARTIAL ARTS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
STAGGER
S-STRONG WOMEN...?
NOW HE'S GOING DEEP INTO THE MOUNTAINS.
THIS CLIENT OF HIS IS REALLY TAKING PRECAUTIONS.
Sigh...
YURI IS MORE HIS TYPE.
OH, NO...
I'M NOT HIS TYPE AT ALL.

I LOVE HANZO...

H-HOW DID YOU KNOW?!
HOW...?
IT'S OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT?
SO, USAGI...
...YOU'VE GOT A CRUSH ON HANZO.
H-HUH?!
TO TELL THE TRUTH...
...I ACTUALLY CAME TO SEGACHI TO BEAR HANZO'S CHILD...
HMM.
...BUT HE REFUSED...
HIS TYPE...?
...DO YOU KNOW WHAT TYPE OF WOMAN HANZO LIKES?
HEY...

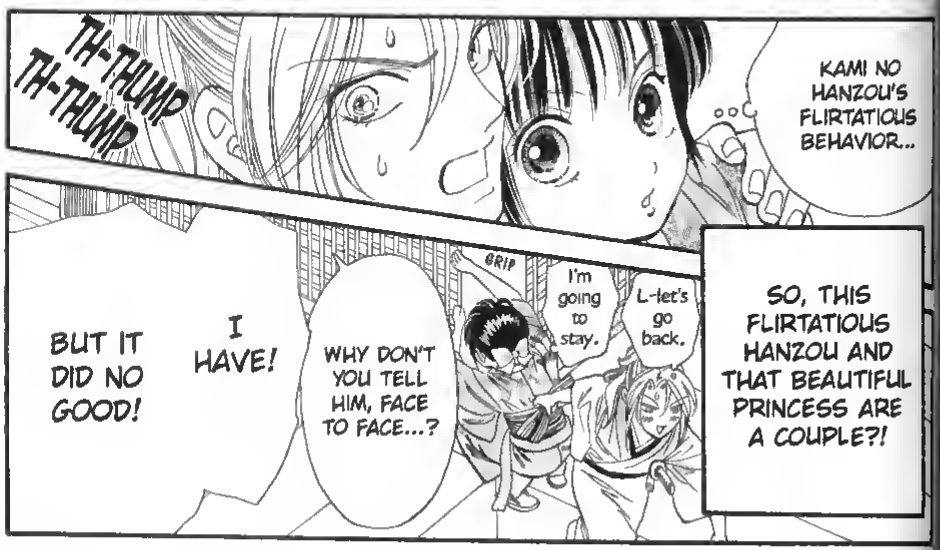
This and that from the author 5

Before Tail of the Moon, all my stories tended to become very serious, the longer they ran. But for this story, it was easy to come up with cheerful stories...

...and enjoy creating the manga every day.

IT'S ABOUT KAMI NO HANZOU.
TH-THUMP
WAIT!
TO TELL THE TRUTH, THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...
SHA
I MUST LEAVE NOW.

...DO YOU KNOW OF ANY WAY TO STOP HIM FROM ACTING LIKE THAT?!
HIS FLIRTATIOUS BEHAVIOR...


TH-THUMP TH-THUMP
KAMI NO HANZOU'S FLIRTATIOUS BEHAVIOR...
SO, THIS FLIRTATIOUS HANZOU AND THAT BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS ARE A COUPLE?!
GRIP
I'm going to stay.
L-let's go back.
WHY DON'T YOU TELL HIM, FACE TO FACE...?
I HAVE!
BUT IT DID NO GOOD!

THANK YOU.
I GAVE A COPY OF IT TO MY FATHER.
THE SECRET RECIPE FOR GUN-POWDER...
I'M GIVING IT BACK TO YOU...
SHE'S B-BEAUTI-FUL!
HANZO...
...ARE YOU STILL ANGRY WITH ME?
NOT AT ALL.
YOU ARE A SAVIOR TO IGA, PRINCESS...
PRINCESS?!

GRAB
HUH?
WHAT! WHAT?!
WHAT DID SHE MEAN?!
FLING
AHHH!
SLAM
HANZOU?!
SARA...
...
RUN
!!
WHAT ?!
MAYBE I WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPIER...
...IF I HAD MARRIED YOU, HANZO.
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT GETTING MARRIED?!
THAT VOICE...
OH NO, IT CAN'T BE...

RAHHH!
PRINCESS!
TP
SSF
FWOOM
HEY!

?!
OUCH ...
WHAT?!
BUT WE WILL NOT SPARE THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO DECIDE TO STAND IN OUR WAY!
ALL WE WANT IS PRINCESS SARA'S HEAD!
WHA ...
EEEEK!
GLARE
DASH
HANZO'S IN DANGER!
HANZO!
SHH
THAT IDIOT...
PRINCESS ...
...QUICKLY, MAKE AN ESCAPE.

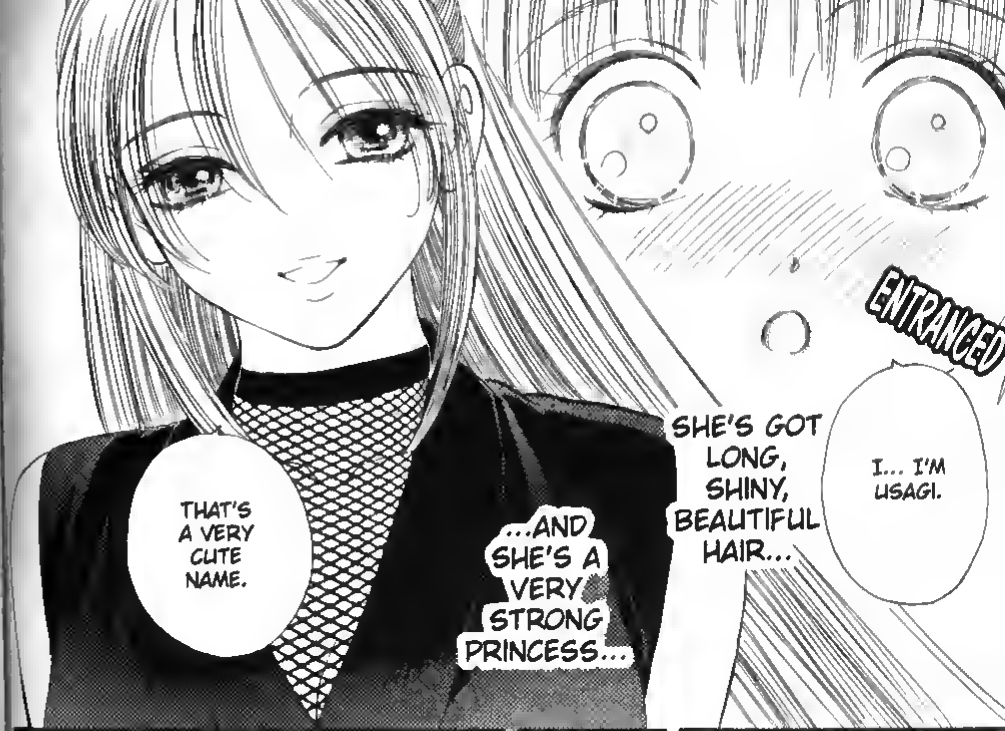
WHONK
YES!
SH-
SHE'S
STRONG!
TMP
DON'T
LET HER
ESCAPE!
DAMN!
BOOSH
SARA
!
SHA
KSHOOM
!!

SHHK
WHO IS THAT GIRL?
YOU FLIRT!
WHA... WHAT WAS THAT FOR?!
A-ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ME?
YOU... YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG.
SHE'S A KUNOICHI TRAINEE, AND SHIMO NO HANZO'S TEACHING HER!!
OH?!
TH THUMP
I'm sorry... I...
SOB
TMP
SHE JUST CAME OVER FROM HOJIRO.
I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING HER THE LAST TIME I VISITED SEGACHI.
TMP
SHE LOOKS EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL CLOSE UP!
WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
HOW DO YOU DO, I'M SARA.
HUFF
HUFF
I KNEW YOU'D DO IT, SARA!!
I'm glad you're safe!
DASH
SMACK
THIS PRINCESS IS UNBELIEVABLY STRONG!

THE ENEMY ?!
ODA NOBUNAGA'S DAUGHTER!
SHE EVEN STOPPED THE ODA TROOPS FROM ATTACKING IGA, JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO.
SARA IS ON OUR SIDE.
YOU CAN TRUST HER.
SSF
THE ODA TROOPS' ATTACK ON IGA...?

SO WHAT ?
STOP IT, WE'RE IN PUBLIC...
SO THAT LARGE BATTLE...
...WAS STOPPED BY THIS PRINCESS...
THEY NEVER CAME DOWN TO HOJIRO, BUT GREAT GRANDPA TOLD ME THAT SEGACH! WAS IN DANGER...

HEY, HANZO...
YES.
SHE'S AMAZING, HANZO!!
WOW !!
...CAN SARA STAY AT YOUR PLACE FOR A WHILE?


ENTRANCED
I... I'M USAGI.
SHE'S GOT LONG, SHINY, BEAUTIFUL HAIR...
...AND SHE'S A VERY STRONG PRINCESS...
THAT'S A VERY CUTE NAME.

AND SHE'S MY GIRLFRIEND! ♡
SARA IS ODA NOBUNAGA'S DAUGHTER, AND AN ELITE NINJA!
I'M RIKIMARU, PRINCESS SARA'S SERVANT.
THE ODA FAMILY...?
PRINCESS... WHO ARE THESE MEN...?
THIS HAS BEEN HAPPENING A LOT LATELY.
EVER SINCE MY IDENTITY WAS DISCOVERED, MANY OF THE WARLORDS WHO ARE AGAINST THE ODA FAMILY SEND MEN TO ATTACK ME...

BUT HANZO ...
...THAT PRINCESS'S LIFE IS IN DANGER...
HANZO ...?
HANZOU ...
I'M SURE THAT HER ENEMIES WILL KEEP AWAY FROM IGA...
NO!
HANZO...
YANK
WE'RE GOING HOME, USAGI!

Tail of the Moon™

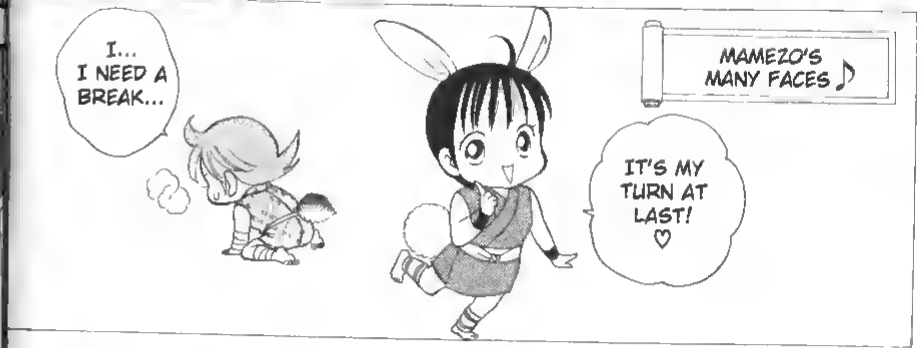
YOU'RE SO COLD, HANZO!
WAP

USAGI... ♡
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO TURN AWAY FROM SOMEONE IN TROUBLE!

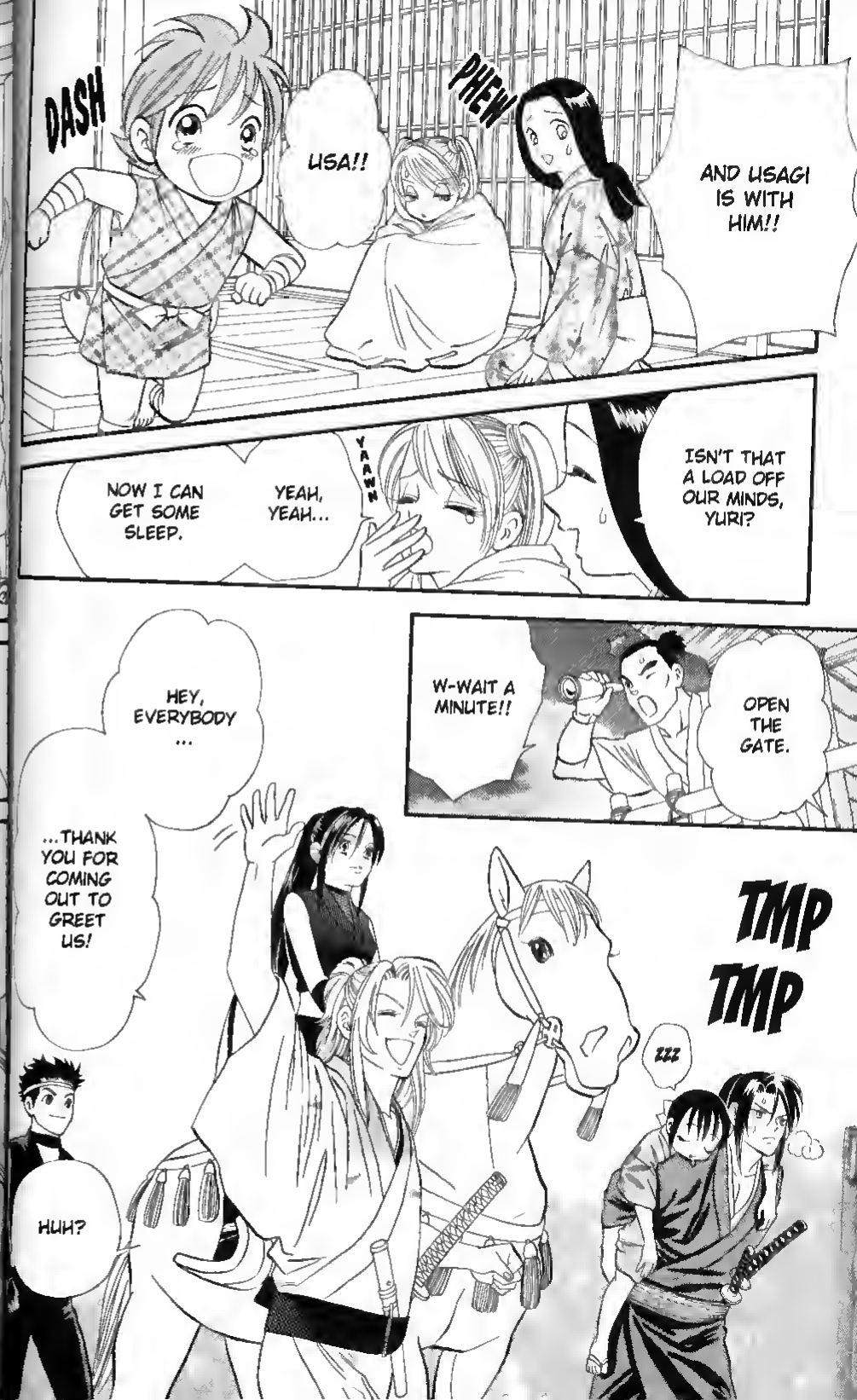
HELP THE PRINCESS!
PLEASE, HANZO!

MASTER HANZO HAS RETURNED.

TMP
TMP
SHE CAN GO BACK TO AZUCHI!
W...
WAIT, HANZO!
THERE ARE ENEMIES READY AND WAITING FOR HER ON THE ROAD TO AZUCHI.
SO...
IT'S OKAY, HANZOU...


I... I NEED A BREAK...
MAMEZO'S MANY FACES ♪
IT'S MY TURN AT LAST! ♡

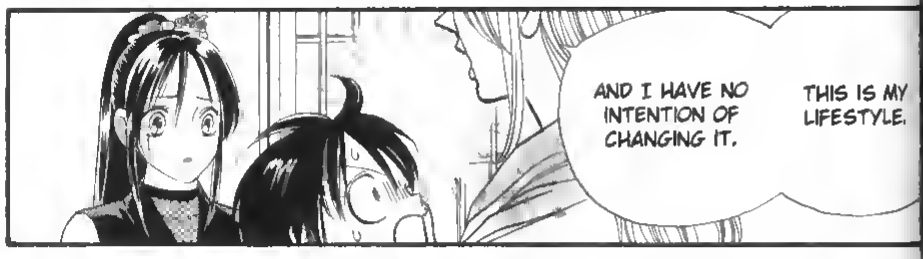
ON GUARD
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, EVERY-BODY.
KAMI NO HANZOU HAS ASKED ME TO PROVIDE THE PRINCESS WITH SHELTER FOR THE TIME BEING.
ZZZ
HI.
WHO IS THAT...?
YOU CAN'T GO!
AHHH, USA!
THANKS A LOT, HANZO ♪
SHE'S HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE WITH YOU...
...BUT YOU'RE STILL NOT GOING TO MARRY HER?
SHE'S A NICE GIRL.
THANK USAGI, NOT ME.
AT LEAST THERE'S NOTHING STOPPING YOU TWO FROM MARRYING EACH OTHER.
IT'S OF NO CONCERN TO YOU.

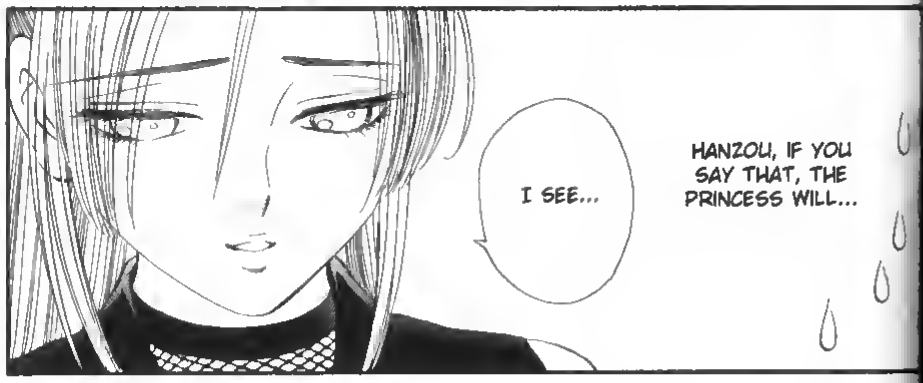

DASH
USA!!
PHEW
AND USAGI IS WITH HIM!!
NOW I CAN GET SOME SLEEP.
YEAH, YEAH...
YAAWN
ISN'T THAT A LOAD OFF OUR MINDS, YURI?
W-WAIT A MINUTE!!
OPEN THE GATE.
HEY, EVERYBODY ...
...THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT TO GREET US!
TMP TMP
ZZZ
HUH?

It's the first time I've touched a piglet.
TP
TP
WE'RE GOING TO START PRACTICE IN THE AFTERNOON.
HMMM.
SLEEP
HUH? WHERE ...?
IF YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEP, CHANGE INTO YOUR NIGHTWEAR.
MY RELATION-SHIP WITH SARA...
MY FATHER WON'T ACCEPT IT.
HANZOU?
HOW CUTE! ♡
HI, I'M RIKIMARU. ♡
Oink.
THIS IS MY PET PIGLET.
HE DOESN'T EVEN WANT TO MEET HER.
NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES, I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM ACCEPT OUR RELATIONSHIP.
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED ...
YOUR FATHER WORKS FOR TOKUGAWA IEYASU.
STARE
YOU WANT ME TO HELP YOU GET UNDRESSED?
THAT'S WHY I'M WATCHING.
EH.. UMM..
I'D LIKE TO GET CHANGED...
COME ON, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SHY.
HA HA HA !
WHIRL
WHIRL
AAAAAH!!
NO THAN ...
THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO BECOME STRONG, SO I CAN PROTECT SARA.
UHHM...
SARA.
NOOOO!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I NEVER SAID ANYTHING THAT EXTREME...
SO YOU DON'T EVEN WANT ME TO SPEAK WITH OTHER GIRLS?
EH... UMM, PRINCESS ...

I LOVE YOU SARA...
...BUT I WON'T STOP BEING KIND TO OTHER GIRLS.
HUH?


AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF CHANGING IT.
THIS IS MY LIFESTYLE.


I SEE...
HANZOU, IF YOU SAY THAT, THE PRINCESS WILL...

AHH! AHH!
I CAN'T.
TRY BREAKING FREE BY YOURSELF.
SHE'S NOT LIKE A NINJA AT ALL.
ISN'T SHE FUNNY?
CUT IT OUT!
LET ME GO.
WHAT ARE YOU SHOUTING ABOUT...?
...WHEN YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I HATE IT?!
HOW CAN YOU FLIRT AND PLAY AROUND WITH OTHER GIRLS...
P-PRINCESS ?!
I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DO IT, HANZOU!

This and that from the author 6

I read every letter I get from all of my readers gratefully. Thank you very much!!
I have never actually seen anybody reading my manga...

...so every time I receive a letter, I think, "Wow, so there really are people who read my manga" and am struck by a huge wave of gratitude.
I really am happy about it!

CLOMP CLOMP

HANZO, WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM.

...AND HANZOU'S GONE BACK TO OKAZAKI!

THE PRINCESS AND HANZOU HAD A FIGHT...

CLOMP CLOMP

BUT...

UMM... UH...

DON'T MAKE A FUSS OVER IT.

THAT'S NOTHING NEW.

SHFF SHFF

WHAT? ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T NEED TO HELP THEM?!

IF YOU'RE AWAKE, DO THE HOUSE-WORK.

DON'T SAY THAT.

YOU BOTH LOVE EACH OTHER, SO...

WHA?

WHA?

WELL, WHY DON'T YOU DO AS YOU LIKE, SARA? OKAY?

THEN I'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO BREAK UP WITH YOU.

WHAT?!

DASH

DON'T BOTHER WITH HER.

PRINCESS ...

OH, NO.

WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

PAT

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE UP...

IT'S MY FAULT THAT YOU TWO GOT IN A FIGHT...

...SO SAY GOODBYE TO HANZO FOR ME.

I'M GOING TO GO BACK TO OKAZAKI...

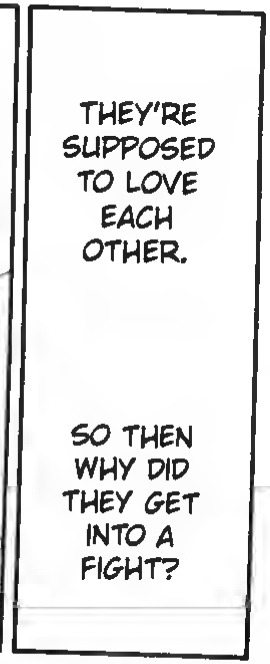
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOUR BOY-FRIEND WAS SO KIND TO ALL THE GIRLS AROUND YOU?
THEN COULD YOU FORGIVE HIM?
EH...
Oh, you're so cute! ♡
FLRT
FLRT
REALLY?
REALLY!
HANZOU REALLY THINKS DEARLY OF YOU.

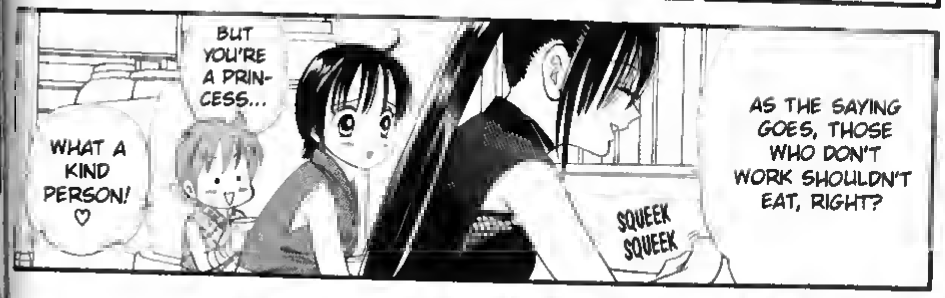
SEE?
I don't want him to be a womanizer ...
I...
I WOULDN'T LIKE IT...

IS THIS A RABBIT'S TAIL?
BUT...
THAT'S RIGHT.
It's cute! ♡
SHIMO NO HANZO GAVE IT TO ME.
THERE IS THE PROBLEM BETWEEN OUR FAMILIES, TOO...
...SO I GUESS HANZOU AND I WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE.

PRIN-CESS!
OH NO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO...
I'M STAYING HERE FOR FREE, SO I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING.

LET ME HELP YOU.
AND ON TOP OF IT, THAT FIGHT WAS ALL MY FAULT..
GLOOM


THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO LOVE EACH OTHER.
SO THEN WHY DID THEY GET INTO A FIGHT?


WHAT A KIND PERSON! ♡
BUT YOU'RE A PRIN-CESS...
SQUEEK SQUEEK
AS THE SAYING GOES, THOSE WHO DON'T WORK SHOULDN'T EAT, RIGHT?

...PLEASE MAKE UP WITH HIM!!
PLEASE...

HANZO ...
MAYBE HE DOESN'T LIKE ME...
He's never given me anything
SOB
DON'T SCOLD USAGI!
SHE IS A GUEST HERE!
AND THE GUEST IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE WORKING!
I'M JUST HELPING HER BECAUSE I WANTED TO...
I'M SORRY.
PRINCESS ...
I'M DOING THIS OF MY OWN FREE WILL.
I'M SORRY...
I...
HE'S...
...THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF HANZOU, ISN'T HE?
I'VE NEVER SEEN HANZO LIKE THAT BEFORE.

I'VE GOT ONE TOO!
HOW LUCKY OF HER TO GET SUCH A NICE GIFT...
MOJ
A CHARM WAS CAST ON IT TO BRING ME GOOD LUCK.
FROM HANZO?!
TROT TROT
HANZO GAVE ME THIS SWORD!
USAGI!
HANZO HAS NEVER GIVEN ME ANYTHING...
Humph.
HEE! ♡
WHAT A NICE SWORD.
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF MAKING THE PRINCESS DO THE DISHES?!
TROMP TROMP
TH-THUMP
YES?!
UH...

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA! ♪
I'M SURE THEIR CHILD WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT HEIR...
NOOOO
DASH
...THEN PRINCESS SARA WILL NO LONGER HAVE A REASON FOR PROTECTING IGA!
BUT IF KAMI NO HANZOU AND PRINCESS SARA AREN'T TOGETHER...
RUMORS SURE DO GO AROUND FAST.
Good grief.
IT WOULD BE GREAT IF SHE'D MARRY MASTER HANZO.
BUT MASTER HANZO AND PRINCESS SARA HAVE ALREADY BEEN MARRIED ONCE BEFORE, DIDN'T YOU KNOW?!
GRRRR!
I'M COMPLETELY OPPOSED TO THAT IDEA!

SHE'S RIGHT.
...
HANZO'S HONEST, HANDSOME...
I GUESS HE WOULD BE THE BETTER MAN TO HAVE AS A HUSBAND.
...AND KIND...
Gimme back my broom!
OINK.
HE'S ALWAYS SO TENSE ABOUT THE PRINCESS...
Hmm..
ESPECIALLY THESE PAST FEW DAYS.
HE'S NOT KIND...
HEY, YOU HEARD ?!
KAMI NO HANZOU AND PRINCESS SARA SPLIT UP!
YEAH, I HEARD!

HANZO'S IN LOVE WITH THE PRINCESS ...

AND EVER SINCE PRINCESS SARA DUMPED HIM, MASTER HANZO'S NEVER BEEN TOO INTERESTED IN GETTING MARRIED.

WHA...?

MARRIED ...?!

WHAT ...?

WHAT IS THAT...?!

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT IT, USAGI?

IT WAS A FAKE MARRIAGE THOUGHT UP BY PRINCESS SARA TO STOP THE ODA TROOPS FROM ATTACKING IGA.

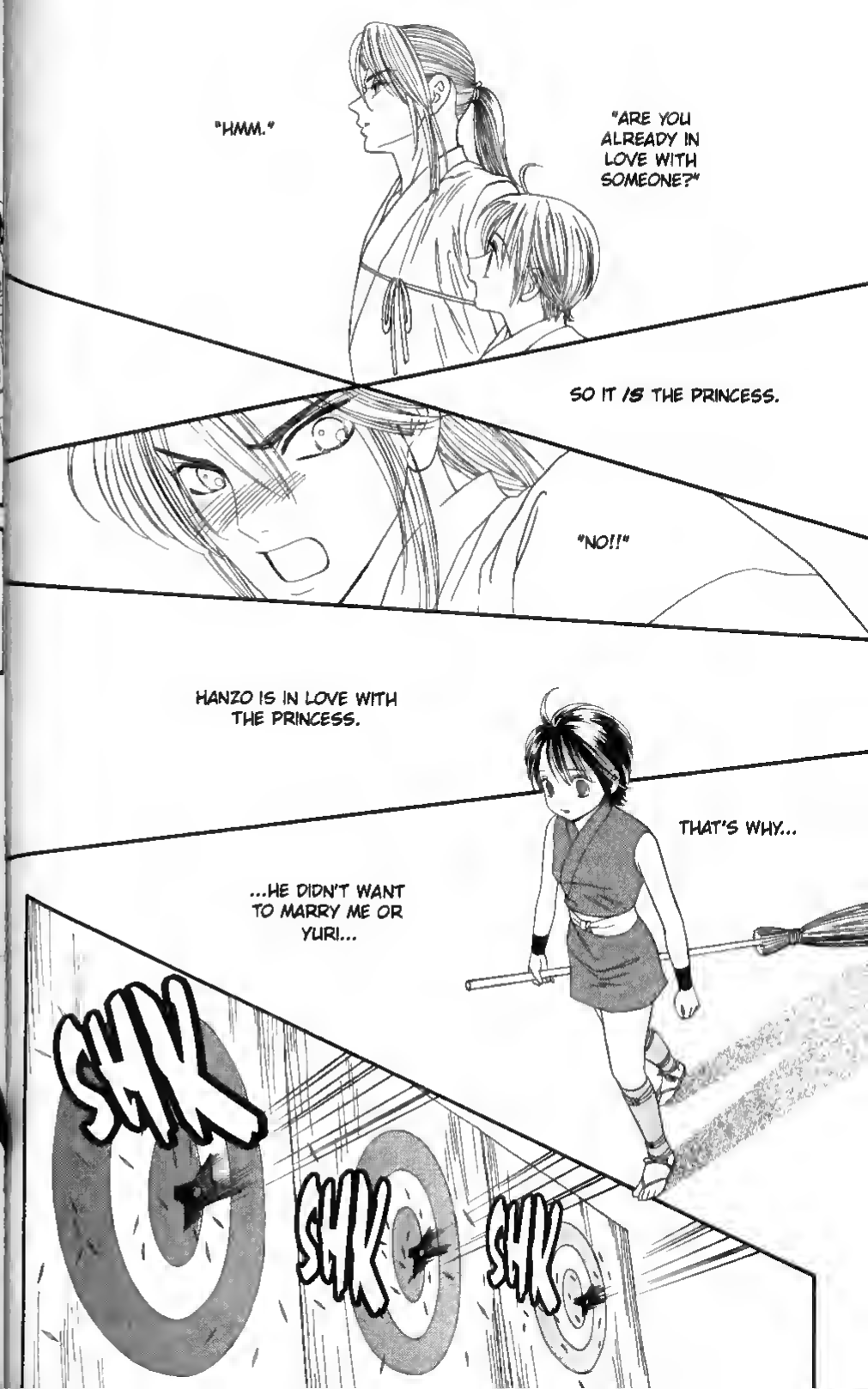
BUT I'M SURE THAT MASTER HANZO WAS COMPLETELY MESMERIZED BY HER, YOU KNOW?!

I THINK SO TOO!

PRINCESS SARA IS DEFINITELY MASTER HANZO'S TYPE.

SO THAT'S IT...

OOOH!
WOW!
CLAP CLAP
NOW, THERE'S AN ELITE NINJA FOR YOU!!
...
WHAT KIND OF TRAINING HAVE YOU BEEN THROUGH?!
SURE.
THROW IT AGAIN.
BEAUTIFUL...
...A STRONG, KIND PRINCESS ...
...LONG HAIR...

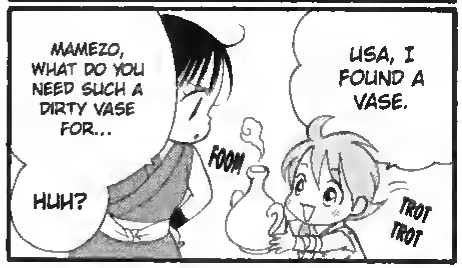

"HMM."
"ARE YOU ALREADY IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE?"
SO IT IS THE PRINCESS.
"NO!!"
HANZO IS IN LOVE WITH THE PRINCESS.
THAT'S WHY...
...HE DIDN'T WANT TO MARRY ME OR YURI...
SHK
SHK
SHK

EVERY-
BODY...
...DON'T
BOTHER THE
PRINCESS SO
MUCH!
TMP
TMP
MASTER
HANZO...
...THE
PRINCESS IS
AMAZING.
LET ME
DO WHAT
I LIKE.
I FEEL LIKE
MOVING MY
BODY RIGHT
NOW!
IF YOU
SAY
SO...
...
USAGI.
I'LL NEVER BE
ABLE TO WIN
AGAINST HER...
THE PRINCESS
IS PERFECT IN
EVERY WAY.
USAGI?
YOU MUST
LEARN
HOW TO
SWIM
FIRST...
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
IT'S TIME
FOR
PRACTICE.
WHAT
IS THE
MATTER?
DON'T YOU
WANT TO GET
YOUR QUALI-
FICATION?!
TUG
EVEN IF I
PRACTICE...
...IT'S
MEANINGLESS
NOW.
USAGI...
...

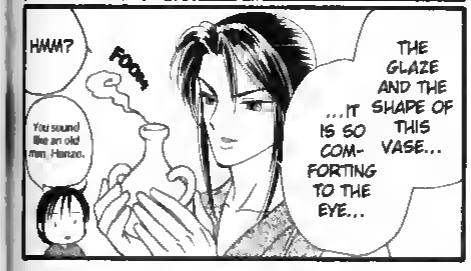
IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE DOING ANYTHING, GET OUT!
CREE
OWW.
THUD
USA!
BOOM
HANZO ?!
NO...
LET ME DOWN!
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
!!
USA ?!
YAH

HANZO'S TRIVIA
THE CHARACTERS FOR "TONKAKU" ARE JUST A PHONETIC COMBINATION THOUGHT UP BY MATSUMI SOSUKI.
Tail of the Moon
Chapter Seven

Please, My Dear Tanba!♬#1

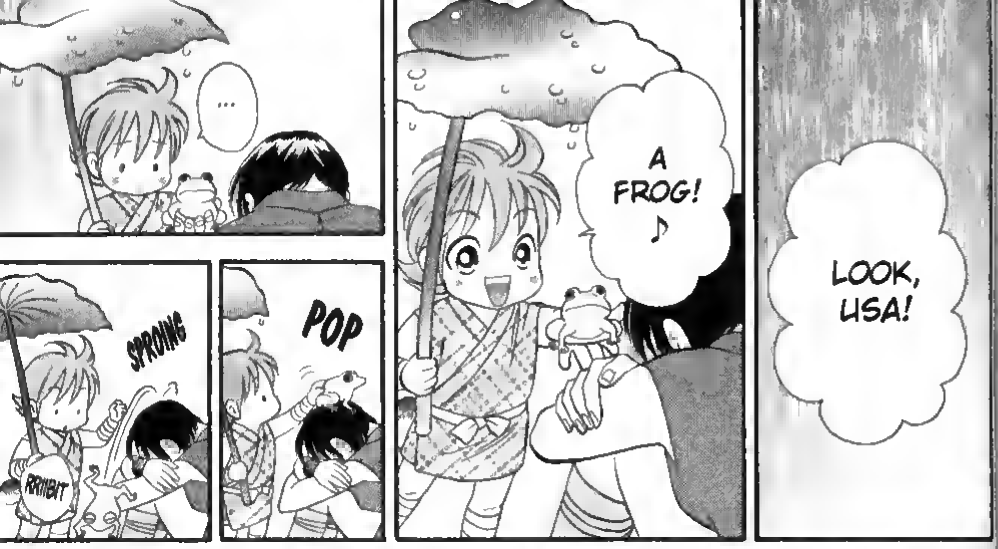


Please, My Dear Tanba!♬#2



MASTER HANZO, AREN'T YOU BEING A LITTLE HARSH...?
DON'T BE MEAN.
THAT'LL TEACH HER A LESSON!
TROMP TROMP
WHAT SHOULD I DO...? I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D BE THAT ANGRY...
HANZO, PLEASE!
WHEN'S HANZO GOING TO LET US BACK IN?
I'M GETTING HUNGRY.
...I FOUND A SESAME DUMPLING! ♪
OH...
RUSTLE

"IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE DOING ANYTHING, GET OUT!!"
I'M SORRY! HANZO...
BANG
...LET ME IN!
BANG
NO WAY!
AHHH!
MAMEZO'S MANY FACES ♪
CONTINUED IN VOLUME 2!



...HANZO ISN'T GOING TO FORGIVE ME.

OUCH...
THIS PLACE...
IT'S WHERE HANZO TOOK ME TO SEE THE FIREFLIES.
THAT WAS WHEN HANZO...
...HELD ME TIGHTLY IN HIS ARMS...
...AND I WAS SO HAPPY.
SO HAPPY...

CREEE
YOU CAN COME IN NOW.
SPLISH
SPLISH
HANZO DOESN'T LIKE ME...
USAGI ...?
TUP
KASPLOOSH
AAAH!
THE RAIN'S BEGINNING TO STOP...
OH, YOU'RE SLEEPING?
SHUSH
SHUSH

I'VE HAD ENOUGH...
BEFORE YOU STEP FOOT IN THE HOUSE, YOU SHOULD TAKE A BATH.
I DON'T WANT TO PRACTICE ANYMORE.
USAGI?
WHAT ARE YOU...
I KNOW YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH THE PRINCESS, HANZO...
...BUT I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO BE LIKE HER NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY!
I'M GOING BACK TO GREAT GRANDPA'S PLACE!
SPLISH

AND YOU'VE SCRAPED YOUR KNEE!
YOU'VE GOT MUD ALL OVER YOU...
I CAN NEVER TAKE MY EYES OFF OF YOU, CAN I?
WHY, HANZO ...?
YOU DON'T EVEN LIKE ME...
USAGI!
SPLISH
SPLISH
THERE YOU ARE!
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?!

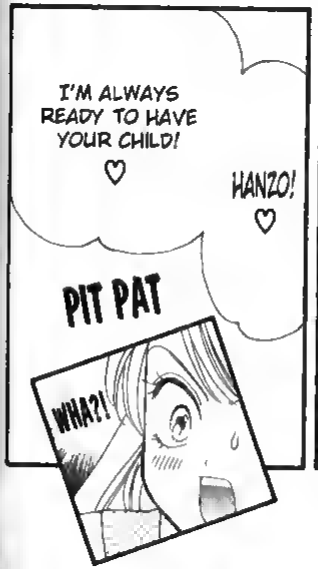
This and that from the author 7

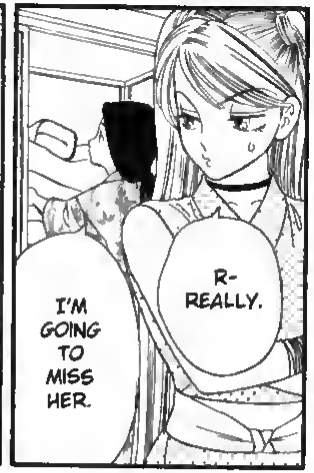
If you've got any remarks or requests, please let me know about them. The address is:

Tail of the Moon
c/o
VIZ Media
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco,
CA 94133

See you all in volume 2!♪

Rinko Ueda





OINK!
OINK!
I DON'T LIKE THIS!
I DON'T LIKE THIS SITUATION AT ALL!
...WALK... ANY-MORE...
...I CAN'T...
OINK, OINK.
OINK...
I CAN'T...
OINK! OINK!
TMP
OI?
TMP
SQEEE!
TMP
TMP

HANZOU ...
I MUST HAVE TIED HIM DOWN TOO MUCH.
BUT I JUST CAN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT HIM.
I'M TRYING TO FORGET ABOUT HANZOU...
I'M HOPELESS, AREN'T I...?
I'M GOING TO TAKE A BATH.
YOU SHOULD GO TO SLEEP NOW, PRINCESS.
PRINCESS ...

MAKE ME YOUR WIFE!
CLING
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU TOO, HANZO!
I WILL NEVER MARRY A STUPID, KLUTZY WOMAN WHO'S NOT EVEN ABLE TO QUALIFY AS A NINJA!!
NO WAY!
HUH?
AAAH, HOW COULD YOU SAY THAT, HANZO?!
AAA-HHH!
POIT
WHAT A GOOD IDEA.
...AND BE HAPPY TOGETHER.
LET'S FORGET ABOUT THIS NOISY GIRL...
HEE HEE HEE!
HA HA HA!
WAIT FOR ME, HANZO!
WAIT!
CLICK!
USAGI!
HANZO ...
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, USAGI!

... THAT'S ...
THA...
YOU CAME FOR ME?!
HANZO !
...I'VE BEEN IN LOVE WITH YOU.
...ALL THIS TIME... TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH...
I'M SO HAPPY, HANZO! ♡
I ACCEPT GRATE-FULLY!
NOOO!
BUT THE PRINCESS LOVES HANZOU...
WHAT ?!
PRINCESS!
PLEASE BECOME MY WIFE!

HEY...
...USAGI.
GO...!
SSKSH
OH... ♡
...GOEMON?!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM W-WITH A GIRL?!
U-USAGI.
DON'T BE SILLY.
THIS IS WORK.

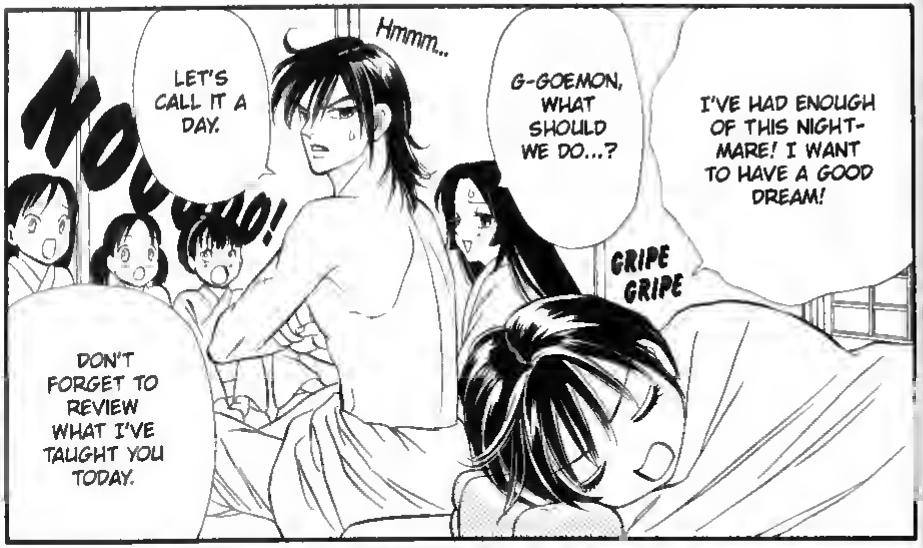
HOW DARE YOU SAY "AAAHHH" TO ME!!
OH... GREAT GRANDPA?!
HUH?! WHY...
YAAAWN ...

AAAHHH!

KONK
DIDN'T YOU USE MY SCROLL ON MATRIMONIAL TECHNIQUES FOR HATTORI HANZO?!
Ouch
HUMPH, NOT ONLY HAVE YOU NOT FULFILLED YOUR ASSIGNMENT, BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN QUALIFIED AS A NINJA!

FORCING HIS HAND SHOULD HAVE HELPED...
DID YOU SERIOUSLY THINK THAT THOSE SILLY TECHNIQUES WERE REALLY GOING TO HELP ME?!
WELL IT DIDN'T HELP.
Like "Steal a kiss"...!!

Hmph!
I'M GOING TO TAKE ANOTHER NAP!
BUT I SEE THAT YOU'VE MATURED BECAUSE YOU'VE BROUGHT A PIGLET BACK AS A GIFT FOR ME.
DON'T EAT IT!
HERE, WHY DON'T YOU EAT SOME MEAT AND CALM DOWN.
OIINK!


NO WAY!
LET'S CALL IT A DAY.
Hmmm...
G-GOEMON, WHAT SHOULD WE DO...?
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS NIGHT-MARE! I WANT TO HAVE A GOOD DREAM!
GRIPE GRIPE
DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW WHAT I'VE TAUGHT YOU TODAY.

HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE AMAZING, RIGHT?
HIS SKILLS AND ALL THAT.
THAT'S RIGHT.

THIS SPRING.
HE HURT HIS LEG IN AN ACCIDENT ON ONE OF HIS ASSIGNMENTS, AND CAN'T WORK OUTSIDE ANYMORE.

BLAH BLAH
HMPH...
...AND IT WAS MY TURN NEXT.
SIS...
...WHEN DID GOEMON BECOME A TEACHER FOR THE KUNOICHI!?
I THOUGHT HE WAS WORKING ON THE OUTSIDE...

I'VE CHANGED THIS ROOM INTO A CLASS-ROOM FOR THE KUNOICHI.
B-BUT WHY ARE YOU USING MY ROOM...?

I SEE THAT KAEDE AND YUI ARE HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY.
HEY!
Y-YES!

OH.
I'M IN THE MIDST OF A PRACTICAL TRAINING SESSION FOR THE KUNOICHI!
WELCOME BACK!
WELCOME BACK, USAGI.

TEMPTING A MALE IS A SKILL THAT EVERY KUNOICHI MUST KNOW IN ORDER TO FULFILL HER ASSIGNMENTS.
YOU NEEDN'T GET NERVOUS.

YEEEE
ARGH!
U-USAGI.
I'M GOING TO SULK IN MY FUTON...
...SO GIVE IT BACK TO ME!
OOH.

WHY DON'T YOU WATCH GOEMON TEACH THE KUNOICHI, USAGI?
WE'LL DO OUR BEST, MASTER!
NO WAY!

THAT WAS JUST SOME NONSENSE THAT GREAT GRANDPA CAME UP WITH, YOU KNOW?!
DON'T BE SO COLD.
SLEEP IN YOUR OWN ROOM!
AFTER ALL, WE USED TO BE ENGAGED.

OOH...
STAB
YOU WERE DUMPED.
LOOK WHO'S TALK-ING.

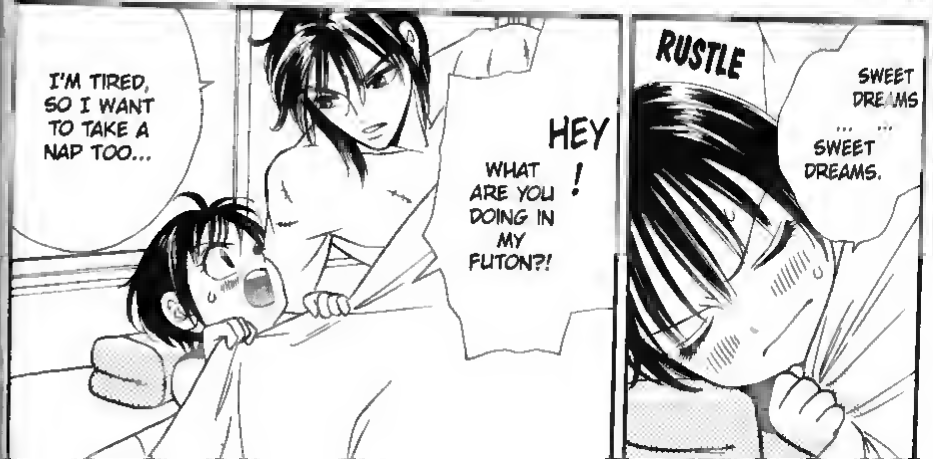
AAAHHH, DON'T SAY IT! IT HURTS!
STAB
STAB
...AND YOU EVEN GAVE UP YOUR NINJA LESSONS AND CAME BACK HERE.
HATTORI HANZO TOOK NO NOTICE OF YOU...

I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU.
H-HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT, ANYWAY?!

I DON'T FEEL THAT NERVOUS ABOUT SURRENDERING MYSELF TO HIM.
BUT I'M GLAD THAT GOEMON IS THE KUNOICHI TEACHER.
...AND HIS SKILLS AS A NINJA WERE THE BEST IN IGA.
GOEMON WAS THE MASTER'S FAVORITE...

BUT GOEMON DIDN'T WANT TO GET MARRIED, SO THE WHOLE THING WAS CANCELED.
I didn't know.
REALLY?!
GOEMON USED TO BE USAGI'S FIANCÉ!
DID YOU KNOW?

...WE ARE TALKING ABOUT USAGI, YOU KNOW...
WELL...


I'M TIRED, SO I WANT TO TAKE A NAP TOO...
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY FUTON?!
RUSTLE
SWEET DREAMS
... ...
SWEET DREAMS.

HANZO IS ACTUALLY A KIND PERSON...
HANZO DID IT FOR ME...
THAT'S RIGHT.
THE FIRST TIME I MET HIM, HE TREATED THE WOUND ON MY KNEE, TOO.
...AND I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH HIM.
BUT...
...HE DOESN'T LIKE ME ANYMORE...
USAGI...?

I'VE KNOWN YOU EVER SINCE YOU WERE BORN.
HERE, I'LL CHANGE IT FOR YOU.
OH...
...HAVEN'T YOU CHANGED THE BANDAGE AROUND YOUR KNEE YET?
USAGI ...
BUT HANZO TIED IT AROUND MY KNEE FOR ME!
NO IT'S NOT. IT'S A DIRTY WASHCLOTH...
IT'S FINE THE WAY IT IS!

I'LL MAKE YOU MY WIFE, USAGI.
FORGET ABOUT HANZO.
GOEMON ...?!
TO BE CONTINUED...

GRAB
GRAB
USAGI'S EYES ARE AS RED AS A RABBIT'S! ♪
SHUT UP AND GO AWAY!!
SNAP
SNAP
YUUMAGI-
WHAT?
ARE YOU CRYING?!
FOR REAL?!
HEY, LET GO OF ME!
I HATE YOU, GOEMON.
HEY!
BOOF!

Page 143: **Ebisu**
The Seven Gods of Fortune (Shichifukujin) are a group of deities who bring people luck. Daikokuten is the god of wealth and prosperity, Benzaiten is the goddess of fine arts and music, and Bishamonten is the god of war. These three gods all originated in India. Hotei is the god of contentment and happiness, Fukurokuju is the god of wisdom and longevity, and Jurojin is the god of longevity. These three gods all originated in China. Ebisu is the god of fortune and commerce, and originated in Japan.

Page 144, panel 2: **Azuchi**
On Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture, where Nobunaga built his castle and the town that were the center of his operations.

Page 148, panel 3: **Tokugawa Ieyasu**
He lived from 1543 to 1616, and became the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and the first person to use Edo (Tokyo) as his capital. Born into a minor noble family, he allied himself with Oda Nobunaga in the 1560s, and continued an uneasy association with Nobunaga's successor Toyotomi Hideyoshi. After Hideyoshi's death, he betrayed Hideyoshi's son (to whom he served as regent) in order to become the first Tokugawa Shogun.

Page 169: **Tonikaku**
This means "after all" or "at any rate" in Japanese, and the characters were chosen for their phonetic sound and not their underlying meaning. It is spelled 兎に角. 兎 is pronounced "to" and means "rabbit," に is the letter "ni," and 角 is pronounced "kaku" (or "tsuno") and means "edge" (or "horn").

Page 169: **Natsume Soseki**
He was one of the most famous literary figures in Japan, and lived from 1867 to 1969. He was on the one thousand yen bill until very recently, when Noguchi Hideo took his place.

Page 192, **Usagi's red eyes**
Goemon is teasing Usagi because her name means "rabbit." Rabbits have red eyes, and Usagi's eyes are red from crying.

Page 95, panel 1: **Oda Nobunaga**
Nobunaga lived from 1534 to 1582, and came close to unifying Japan. He is probably one of the most famous Japanese warlords. He was the first warlord to successfully incorporate the gun in battle, and is notorious for his ruthlessness. He completely razed Mt. Hiei, a major Japanese Buddhist site of the time, and spared no lives in the battle. He was assassinated at the age of 48 by two of his generals.

Page 110, panel 5: **Unagi**
Unogi means "eel" in Japanese. *Usagi* means "rabbit."

Page 117: **Burdock**
Burdock root is called *gobo* in Japanese, and is used extensively in cooking. It is sold as an herbal supplement in the Western market, and is said to have antibacterial and antifungal properties, and to purify blood, clear up skin, lower blood sugar, and even reduce tumors.

Page 121, panel 6: **Okazaki**
Okazaki is in Aichi Prefecture on the main island of Honshu, about 22 miles from Nagoya.

Page 128, panel 4: **Princess**
Sara is not a princess in the European sense of the word. The Japanese word *hime* means a young woman of noble birth.

Page 129, panel 3: **Kami no Hanzou**
The term *kami no* means "the Upper," and can refer to social status. However, since Hanzou is a member of a branch family, it is very unlikely that his status is higher than that of the head of the entire clan, Hanzo. The term *kami no* can also refer to geographic location in relation to an important city center, such as the capital. Hanzou is from Okazaki, which is closer to Edo than Hanzo's home in Segachi.

Page 137, panel 2: **Shimo no Hanzo**
Shimo no means "the Lower," and in this case refers to Hanzo's geographic location rather than social status.

The ways of the ninja are mysterious indeed, so here is a glossary of terms to help you navigate the intricacies of their world.

Page 8, panel 3: **Ninjutsu**
The mystical art of the ninja.

Page 17, panel 6: **Kurokage**
Literally means "Black Shadow," a suitable name for a ninja dog.

Page 22, panel 8: **Ninja sword**
Called *shinobi-gatana*, which literally means ninja sword, to differentiate it from a samurai sword.

Page 40, panel 7: **Water Spider**
Water spiders, or *mizu-gumo*, are similar in concept to snow shoes, and allow ninja to walk on water. They are named after the insect with a similar ability.

Page 49, panel 1: **High-ranking ninja**
There are three ninja ranks. The highest rank is Jonin, the middle rank is Chunin, and the lowest rank is Genin.

Page 49, panel 1: **Kunoichi**
A term often used for female ninja. The word is spelled くノ一, and when combined, the letters form the kanji for woman, 女.

Page 63, **Kankodori**
The phrase "the kankodori sings" means a business is not doing well, since the song of the cuckoo is lonely and desolate, just like a store without customers. The word *kankodori* is usually only used in this phrase. The more common name for cuckoo in Japanese is *kakko*.

Page 4, panel 1: **Tensho Era**
The Tensho Era was from 1573 to 1591. In Japan, every time a new emperor is enthroned, a new era begins in his honor. The current era is Heisei.

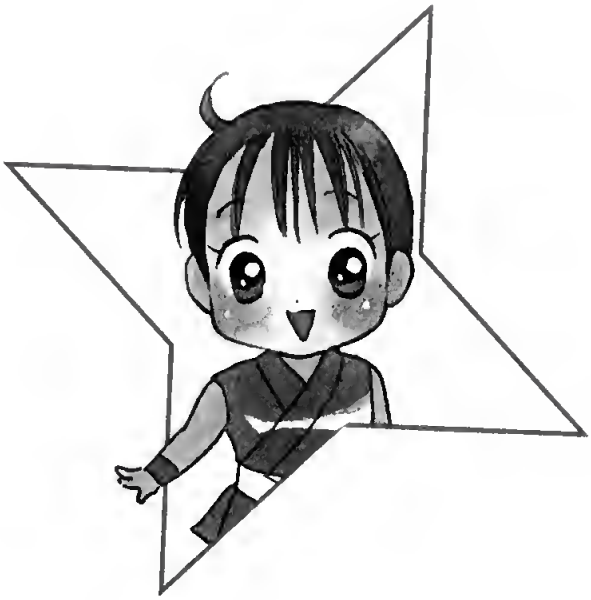
Page 4, panel 1: **Iga**
Iga is a region on the island of Kyushu, and also the name of the famous ninja clan that originated there. Another area famous for its ninja is Koga, in the Shiga prefecture on Honshu. Many books claim that these two ninja clans were mortal enemies, but in reality inter-ninja relations were not as bad as stories paint them.

Page 5, panel 3: **Slow Kame**
Kame can mean turtle in Japanese, although this slow ninja's name is spelled in hiragana, and therefore doesn't have an explicit meaning.

Page 8, panel 3: **Asuka Era**
This era was named after the capital city of the time and spanned 592-710 CE. This was the time when the Imperial Dynasty was just establishing its sovereignty.

Page 8, panel 3: **En-no-Gyojya**
Also known as En-no-Ozumu. This semi-mythological sorcerer from the late 7th century is said to have founded Shugendo.

Page 8, panel 3: **Shugendo**
Literally means "the way of training and testing." It is an ancient ascetic practice to develop spiritual powers by gaining a deeper understanding of Humanity and Nature. It was born from a mixture of indigenous Japanese shamanism, Kannabe Shinko, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.



This is the first historical comedy I have ever drawn. Until now, I used to enjoy drawing the pictures, but for this manga, I have been able to really enjoy creating the storyline, too. I drew this manga in a relaxed and comfortable mood, so I hope you will enjoy this in a fun and enjoyable spirit.

–Rinko Ueda

Rinko Ueda is from Nara prefecture. She enjoys listening to the radio, drama CDs, and Rakugo comedy performances. Her works include *Ryo*, a series based on the legend of Gyojo Bridge, *Home*, a story about love crossing national boundaries, and *Tail of the Moon (Tsuki no Shippo)*, a romantic ninja comedy.